THE SEEKERS

by JESSIE E. SAMPTER

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by JESSIE E. SAMPTER

With an introduction by
PROFESSOR JOSIAH ROYCE

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THE SEEKERS

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

BY

PROFESSOR JOSIAH ROYCE, PH.D., LL.D.

I HAVE been asked by the author to say a word by way of introduction to this very interesting record of conversations and inquiries. On the whole, I feel my word to be superfluous; for the book speaks for itself, and every reader will form his own opinion. But since the author has asked for my co-operation, I gladly offer what little I can.

I am a teacher of philosophy at a university. For the most part my own courses are technical in character. Some of my work is with graduate students. I am accustomed to discuss controverted opinions with people who regard philosophy from a skeptical and more or less controversial, and almost always highly critical, point of view. Hence, my own first impression of the work of the "Seekers" and of the leader of their always pleasing inquiries, was mingled with a certain wonder as to the possibility of their

accomplishing together, as well as they have done, what they undertook. This wonder has changed, as I have become better acquainted with them, into a delight that the tact, the caution, the tolerance and the earnestness of the leader, and the skill and docility of the pupils, could result in setting before us so fine a model of teaching and of learning as here appears. The book is one to encourage every lover of good things, and everyone who wants to see how the minds of young people in this country, and living under good conditions, can be turned toward great questions in such a way as to encourage sincerity, thoughtfulness and the beginnings of true wisdom.

In what little I have to say of this book I ought of course to abstract altogether from such agreement as I indeed feel with the form of Idealism which Miss Sampter represents. The question put to me is the question whether the method of procedure here adopted is one that promises to be genuinely useful as an initiation of young people into the study of deeper questions. I answer that the author seems to have made out her case, and to have proved her faith in her method by her work. The age and the previous training of the "Seekers"—as they are sketched in the author's preliminary statement—once presupposed, this mode of procedure could only prove a help to them. The methods used are an important beginning. If any of the "Seekers" go on to a more advanced study of philosophy, in college or elsewhere, they ought to prove apt learners. If they simply

turn to life as their further teacher, they should be ready to profit by some of its deepest lessons better than they could otherwise have done. If, upon further inquiry, they incline to other opinions about the world and about life than the ones they have emphasized, they will still always remain more tolerant of the varieties of opinion, and more hopeful of the right and the power of the human mind to grapple with grave issues, than they would otherwise have been. These hours of "seeking" will have opened their eyes to values which are indeed permanent, whatever will be the true solution of the problems of philosophy; and the memory of these hours will prove henceforth a safeguard against cynicism when they doubt, and against intolerance and inhumanity when they believe. And, whatever the truth may be, about God, or about the world, or about life, cynicism in doubt, and intolerance and inhumanity in belief, are great evils, against which the young people of our time need to be guarded quite as much as men needed to be guarded against such evils in the days either of the Sophists or of the Inquisitors. For, in one guise or another, speaking the language of old or of new faith or unfaith, Sophists and Inquisitors we have always with us, either corrupting or oppressing the youth. The methods of our author, as set forth in this book, make for liberty together with seriousness, for self-expression together with reverence, for thoughtfulness together with a sense of deeper values. And in so far the book is a success as

a model of the way in which our new problems must be met when we have to deal with the young.

If one undertakes to consider such topics with a class as youthful and at the same time as enlightened as the "Seekers," the dilemma is obvious. One must indeed be more or less dogmatic in tone about at least some central interest; one must make use of the persuasive power of a teacher's personal influence; or else one will lead to no definite results. On the other hand, if one propounds one's dogmas merely as the traditional teacher of religion has always done by saying: "This is our faith. This is what you should believe,"—one is then in no case teaching philosophy, and one is hardly helping the young people to "seek." Moreover, such mere dogmas, addressed to young people in whom the period of "enlightenment" has already begun, will tend to awaken in their minds new doubts and objections, rather than to convey to them the positive truth, even if one's own dogmas happen to be true. Hence arises a problem of instruction which cannot be solved in the case of these "Seekers" as we teachers of philosophy often try nowadays to solve our analogous problems in dealing with older pupils in college. Some of us meet our own problems with the older students by directly disclaiming all authority to control their convictions, by asking them to become as self-critical and independent as they can, and by stating our own opinions with the intent *not* to make disciples, but to enable our students to form their own personal judgments through the very

sympathy with our efforts to be reflective, self-critical and constructive. Thus we do not try to convey a faith so much as to help our students to their own spiritual independence.

In strong opposition to our mode of procedure, many popular teachers of this or that form of "New Thought" have been trying of late to annul modern doubts, and to lead men to a higher spiritual insight by means of certain "intuitions," for the sake of which skeptical inquiry, stern criticism, elaborate reflection must be laid aside; so that the kindly disposed learner, even if he indeed is not to be a believer in certain old-fashioned creeds, still looks to his teacher for a means of quieting his doubts, and so that what is supposed to be "philosophy" becomes a sort of "anæsthetic revelation," with the teacher as the assistant who administers the anæsthetic whereby the pupil is prepared for the surgery of life.

Now, whatever may be the use of such "New Thought" for invalid wrecks, or even for more or less world-weary lovers of the good, whom sad experience has turned away from their earlier religious creeds, and who need to be restored to their courage in facing reality;—still, these anæsthetic methods of the lovers of the "silence" and of the vague light, are *not* suited to the best needs of the enlightened young people, such as these "Seekers" who are about to begin life, who know their little fragments of science, of socialism, and of modern problems, and who want unity with clearness. Nor are such young

people at just this age yet ready for our more technical academic procedure. Shall they be left then unguided, until their interest in unifying life has been lost in the confusion and variety of their increasing knowledge, until their youthful idealism has been saddened and perhaps soiled by the world, and until their criticism of life has become at once tragic and cynical?

Miss Sampter has undertaken to answer these questions by dealing with the need of just such people. She does so with a genuine clearness of vision, with a careful touch that helps and with a spirit which prepares them to meet their problems, and not to lose unity by reason of the complexities of their situation. She dogmatizes a little, to be sure; and in fact she repeats some of her dogmas not infrequently, without giving any elaborate reasons for these dogmas. They are the dogmas of a metaphysical idealism which I myself in the main accept, but which no direct intuition can very adequately justify, while their technical justification could not possibly be discussed at length in the meetings of the "Seekers." On the other hand, our author is no mere partisan of intuition. Her dogmas are stated in forms that not only win her "plastic youth" to agreement, but challenge them to a reflection which ere long, in some of them, will lead to new interpretations, to doubts, and so, in time, to a higher insight than they at first gain. She sets her pupils to thinking as well as to receiving; they become inquirers rather than passive recipients of

an intuition. They are thus prepared for a variety of future religious and philosophical experiences, and yet they are kept in touch with that love and hope of unity which alone can justify the existence of our very doubts, of our philosophical disputes, and of our modern complications of life.

As a means of avoiding both of the opposing extremes sketched in the foregoing account of the ways of teaching philosophical opinions, as a *via media* in the work of beginning the philosophical instruction of young people, as a preparation for more critical study, as a conservation of some of the best in the spirit of faith without an undue appeal to mere intuition, and as a model of what can be done to awaken a very notable type of young inquirers such as our modern training tends to produce in the homes of very many of us—this book is, in my opinion, to be very heartily commended.

The educational problem with which it deals concerns meanwhile a very deep and intensely practical interest of our American civilization. We cannot retain the unity of our national consciousness unless we can keep, even in the midst of all the complications and doubts of the modern world, our sense of the great common values of the spiritual world. Without philosophy, our nation can therefore never come to its own. Philosophy does not mean the acceptance of any mere authority. And it will not lead us to universal agreement about any one form of creed. But it will teach us to unite freedom, tolerance, in-

sight, and spirituality. Without these, of what worth would be mere bulk and mere wealth to our nation? I welcome this book then because our author has contributed to one of the most important of the tasks of our time—the task of helping our nation to regain the now much confused and endangered consciousness of its own unity.

JOSIAH ROYCE

Harvard University, August 3, 1910.

THE SEEKERS

THE BEGINNING

THIS is a live book. It was lived first, and written only afterwards. So it can lay no claim to the title of art, which is experience remoulded in the cast of individual genius; for this was not at all moulded, save as the written word reshapes the spoken. It is a philosophic adventure, an experiment, written down by one, but lived by seven.

Why did I write it down? may be asked. Every new book needs an excuse for being. I wrote it down because it seemed an answer, perhaps a partial, but still a living answer, to two questions that cry aloud.

As I look about me, and observe the doings and thoughts of men and women in this active time, I notice two problems, related one to the other, and wanting but one solution.

First of these is a lack of common purpose in the works of life. Many religions are there, many creeds and anti-creeds, many purposes, from petty, selfish gain to reforms in government and social service. Scientist, politician, artist, philanthropist and minis-

ter go each toward a partial goal, in opposition to one another, with no one purpose, no end beyond all lesser ends, no larger patriotism. Morals are either very stiff or very lax, without any conscious reason for either their stiffness or their laxity. The only reason for moral conviction, the only purpose that could unite all purposes, the only patriotism to hold all men together and give the union needful for great and strong achievement, is a common faith in the goal and meaning of life.

The second problem is a more conscious one, the problem of moral and religious education for our children. For ourselves—so think many among us—we do not need a philosophy or religion; we are good enough without having any reason for being good. But we think our children need some instruction and guidance, something to satisfy the blessed cravings and doubts that we have long since killed within ourselves. For barely one among us fails to remember his fifteen-year-old questionings and strivings, and his defeat, when at last he decided to think no more, because his problem was insoluble. But even these who are so well contented with their own hard-won torpor want something better for their children. The question is asked again and again: "Shall we teach our children what we do not believe? And can we teach them what we do believe?"

In this book I attempt to solve both problems at once, and through the children to speak to their parents. For many who will not admit the least in-

terest in the vital questions that have created every religion and philosophy throughout time, still are interested and will listen when the problem touches their own children. And only through the creative, open and daring mind of youth, not yet either stiffened or broken, can the spirit of a larger and a richer faith give new inspiration.

I am convinced that to-day all thoughtful men believe the same, where vital questions arise, and that each man sees a different angle of the same truth, which grows and grows in our vision, with the growing knowledge of man. All our ministers with their different churches, and our congregations with their sectarian prejudices, have at heart a common goal, a faith that needs only to be spoken to be believed. Let their children draw them together. Find a common religion to be taught in the school—where this necessity is the present problem of all educators, and where so far ethical courses and emasculated Christianity have given no solution—and from that larger patriotism of a common faith in childhood will spring the faith bigger than ethics and philanthropics, big enough to include all churches and systems in an unseen brotherhood.

Were I able to carry out this idea in a school, I would have classes or clubs, such as the Seekers, for all girls and boys of about the third or fourth high-school year. Then, for the younger children as well as for the older ones, I would have songs and readings at the assembly, which would suggest or picture

forth the inmost spirit of our modern faith. These songs and readings I would let the older pupils choose and discuss in their clubs; and I would leave in their hands, as much as possible, the social and spiritual regulation of the school life. Faith and action go together. Each without the other is barren.

My purpose in this book is then twofold: to record how such clubs and classes work in practice, and thereby suggest a method from experience; also to give, in such large and perhaps superficial aspect as the means necessitate, the main outline of my thought. Not mine alone, but yours and every man's. I bring no news; but only an old, forgotten story, new and strange to our widened knowledge. Accept its large intent, if you reject its lesser achievement; admit that this is the only possible truth in the light of our present knowledge. Though you believe more than this, accept at least the Seekers' path as pointing toward the goal. To these children it gave a way and a light; it satisfied a need and answered a question, and brought new weapons for the battle of thought wherein most of us fail from weariness. For them it has already succeeded, whatever its coming fate.

Unless one sees a glimpse of truth at fifteen, enough to recognize it, one is not likely to discern it later, through the mist of unformed knowledge. And at fifteen one craves this something that can relate and shape all thought. So it happened that I organized the club of Seekers, composed of very different girls and boys, because of this one common need.

The conditions necessary for membership were few. The first condition, the one in its nature inevitable, was that each member should be interested and enthusiastic in our quest, a seeker from need and desire. Only such would have stayed with us. And this, perhaps, was a selective process of extreme rigor. Otherwise the conditions of membership were not of the sort to put a premium on extraordinary ability. They were that the members should be over fourteen, and under seventeen, and should have finished their elementary school course. I also limited the membership in number. Among my acquaintances were many more girls who would have wished to join us, but no more than the two boys. I explain this not by the fact that boys are less interested in these questions, but that their interest develops later. If I had sought boys of eighteen or nineteen, I could have found them easily. At the time, however, I did not realize this fact.

I think that the children were average of their kind. The kind, nevertheless, may have carried with it some intellectual superiority or precocity, such as the effects of environment and urban life. For these things, through the chance of acquaintanceship, they had in common: they were all bred in New York City, in educated families of the upper middle class (though not all of well-to-do parents), and all but one, Ruth, who is a Christian Scientist, of homes unusually liberal in their religious thought. Therefore these children were free from those clogging super-

stitions and false perspectives which result from early training in any symbolic and fixed creed. Take these influences for what they were worth. Beyond them the children had no special advantage or disadvantage.

I say all this as a defence against a possible criticism: namely, that the children seem, by their comprehension and original ideas, to be far above the average boys and girls of the same age. This I deny, and for good reasons. Naturally I have meant this experiment of a class in religious philosophy for adolescent boys and girls to be general in its application. And I believe it to be so. Most grown people have forgotten how they felt and thought at fifteen, and are apt to underrate the mental processes of boys and girls. I myself at that age felt so keenly the lack of sympathy in older people that I made a point of remembering and writing down certain experiences. I questioned several friends, and at last got admissions from them that they, too, had thought in the same way at fifteen. But no doubt they still look upon themselves as unique in this respect, for at fifteen we all think ourselves exceptions, and no matter how commonplace we may be now we are apt vaguely to keep that memory.

Then, too, one must not forget the effect of conscious and unconscious suggestion. I had my plans carefully made, and knew exactly in what direction I meant to lead our ideas, but the children knew very little of this foreplanning, and went of themselves

where I wished them to go. No doubt suggestion blazed trails for them through this wilderness, if it did not make a path, and, as my record will prove, my questions often stimulated them to answers that would not otherwise have been possible. But often their answers were wholly unexpected and surprising. As our name tells, we are seekers, and I have found, at the very least, as much as they. Above all, my boundless faith in the young was justified. And my critics must admit that they have not this faith themselves, and so could never have put it to the test of experience, as I have done.

The children's papers show better than written words of mine exactly what the meetings meant to them, and will prove also, I think, their average ability. They are printed exactly as written, save for corrections in spelling and punctuation, which were by no means perfect.

The conversations were recorded as precisely as possible from memory and from notes taken immediately after the meetings. As any one with experience will know, it is impossible to record the broken fragments of actual speech without sometimes combining mere phrases into complete sentences. The written is never like the spoken thought. It appears like it, which it would not do if it were a precise phonographic transcription.

I have made the children speak "in character," using always their own words and their own ideas, whatever those might be; even being careful to record

characteristic phrases and expressions. And that I had succeeded was proved by the children themselves, when they heard the manuscript read and recognized themselves and each other, to their great amusement. Not until all the meetings were over had they any idea that I was keeping this record.

We seven, then, have made this book; and one other one, who, though never present at the meetings, had his large share of influence in them. This was my friend and Florence's big brother Arthur—so often quoted by her—and quoted by me without acknowledgment, especially in the meetings on the æsthetic ideal, which would have been impossible without his help.

For all lovers of youth and individual thought, for all lovers of the quest, we have made this book, as a personal recognition of the bond of kinship that binds all free seekers, and as an answer to those vital questions which all of us must ask together, and answer, at least in sympathy.

THE MEMBERS

ALFRED, my cousin, not quite fifteen years old when the club was begun. In his first high school year. In appearance, a young Arab chieftain, dark, athletic and dignified. His character fulfils the promise: he is taciturn, slow to act, independent, serious for his age, and with a great thirst for knowledge. A lover of nature and the country; a hater of all things petty or mean. He entered the club with a good knowledge of evolution, and no religious training of any sort.

VIRGINIA, my cousin, almost sixteen years old. She had one year of high school, but as she would not study, and drew pictures instead, she was sent to art school a year and a half ago, where she has been working hard. She has read and re-read many good books. Although she is of a blonde, Saxon type, yet her hair and eyes are very dark. Light-hearted and yet earnest, self-satisfied, always sweet and lovable. Bright, interested, original, humorous. She has had no definite religious training, but much sound religious philosophy at home.

FLORENCE, a young friend, fifteen years old, but much older in appearance. In her third high school year. Large and dark, with gray eyes. She is vacillating, and may turn out to be a fine, independent,

intelligent and forceful woman, or a materialistic, flippant society lady. It depends on the influences brought to bear, and on her own will. Somewhat spoiled. A good student, a good thinker, but not impelled to think by any great desire. She loves dancing more than anything else in the world. She comes from a home of mixed and uncertain piety.

HENRY, Florence's cousin, not quite sixteen years old, unknown to me before we formed the club. In his second high school year. A young student, dark, slim, shy, with much to say, but not yet able to say it well. He is rather dogmatic, but open to influence, a born seeker. Often appearing at first to be slow, or commonplace, he suddenly reveals unexpected understanding and originality. He comes from a conventional home.

MARIAN, Florence's friend, also unknown to me before the club. Fifteen and a half years old. In her fourth—last—high school year, preparing for college. A light brunette of a languid and yet intellectual type. Very intuitive, of quick insight, sympathetic, a lover of human nature, shy and quiet. A dreamer and a hero-worshiper. She expresses herself well, but often in broken sentences and with hesitation. Her parents belong to the Ethical Culture Society, and have given her no religious education.

RUTH, Marian's chum, sixteen years old, is also in her last high school year, preparing to study kindergarten. A slight, blonde girl, tall, and with her character written in her face: self-possessed, poise,

idealism. Her voice, enunciation and language are those of one trained to speak well. Her thought is unusually developed, but along rather narrow lines. She loves children, and has chosen her work with an idealistic devotion. Her mother is Christian, her father Jewish, and their religion is Christian Science. She is a convinced Christian Scientist.

FIRST MEETING

When we were all gathered about the table at three o'clock, I opened the discussion thus:

"Do you remember that I told you we were going to speak to-day of the fact that there is almost no religion at present, and the cause for this? Now, are we all agreed that there is very little religion—true religious belief—at present?"

All agreed to this except Henry. He said that he thought people were as religious as ever.

"I think," said Florence to Henry, "that you are confusing religion and creed. People belong to churches and temples, and think they are religious, but they don't know what they believe."

I saw Henry was not convinced, so I said to him: "I think perhaps we do not mean the same thing by religion, therefore we might as well go on, and speak of it later, when we do understand.

"Now, I believe there is a definite historic reason for our religious lack, and I will tell it to you."

Then I reviewed briefly the history of ancient religions, Brahmanism, the Egyptian creed, the Greek and the early Catholic religions, to show that all these for various reasons—but chiefly because of the ignorance of the populace—had been, as it were, double religions. There was an initiated religion of the

priests, who did indeed see truth, who were monotheists of the universal vision, and were filled with the sense of unity in all things. Besides this was the religion of myths, the popular religion. The people took literally the poetical tales told by the prophets; and these prophets, or priests, even went so far as to deceive the people purposely, for what they considered the people's good.

"I don't see how the priests could have known the truth," Ruth said, "if they meant to deceive the populace. Those who knew the truth would not wish to deceive."

"You are right," I answered; "they had not the whole truth, but in so far as they saw, they saw truly."

Ruth seemed to doubt this historic account. I quietly proved to her and the others that it was true. I read them a passage from Plato's "Republic," in which he recommends telling the people a myth because belief in it would put them in the proper frame of mind.

I went on to explain how the democratic spirit began to destroy the religion of the initiated. The aristocracy of religion was as much resented as the aristocracy of government.

The result was that every one believed the popular, mythical religion; and that is what most of our churches have lived upon since then. All the superstitions of creeds, the absurd stories that are believed literally by some people even to-day, are the

poetic symbols of prophets and teachers, accepted as narratives of fact.

Next came the scientific spirit, and said: "The world is more than six thousand years old; it was not created in a week; the whale could not have swallowed Jonah, and given him up again." Now people cried out: "Religion is not true. We will believe nothing but science."

When I spoke of the difference between mythical and true religion, I found the children already understood this, that they realized Moses' true meaning when he spoke of the burning bush; that they knew Jesus, when he spoke of himself as the son of God, meant to express the divinity of man. I said the true religion spoke in poetry, and the popular made its figures of speech into gods.

"For instance," I said, "from where comes the line, 'The rosy fingers of the dawn'?"

"From Homer," answered Marian, "from the Odyssey."

"Well," I went on, "a person reading that might say, 'Just think, the dawn has fingers; then it must have a hand.'"

"Then," said Virginia, "he would add, 'So the dawn is a woman.'"

I said one might worship an image of a god, but if he kept his mind upon the vast divine unity he would not be an idol worshiper.

"But," objected Henry, "if he did it long enough, he would become an idol worshiper."

"He might," I said, "but he need not."

Now we came to the question of science. What has religion to do with science?

Alfred said science led in the same direction, was looking for the same thing.

Henry said science was supposed to be in opposition to religion, because it destroyed her creeds.

That, I answered him, seemed to me a good thing.

Virginia said she thought religion and science were almost the same. She meant that her scientific knowledge of the universe led her to her religious convictions.

Florence said she thought science and religion were altogether separate, had nothing to do with each other.

Marian said she did not see how science could help us to religious knowledge. But it turns out that she has read no science at all, save what she was taught in school.

Ruth said that science was the enemy of religion, that two things seeking in a different way could not possibly both reach the truth; that science might tell us of material facts, but could not possibly give us the divine truth.

I asked: "Are you sure material truth is not divine truth?"

Then I said that I myself thought science was the servant of religion, that it was valuable only in so far as it helped us to a knowledge of life—divine and whole—(I said aside to Ruth) and that I did think

it helped us so. It gave us a sense of unity, of our relation with the whole world, because we knew that the same law moved us and the stars.

"Now," I went on, "Marian mentioned the other day that she had heard people say they were too educated to need religion. They meant they knew too much science. Can science replace religion?"

They all said no.

They saw at once that behind every science was the mystery, the unexplained, and that every scientist must begin with a philosophy.

I said: "I have heard people say that science disproves immortality."

Virginia answered: "It does not disprove immortality. It proves, indeed, that nothing ever is destroyed."

"Do you think," I asked, "that there is such a thing as absolute religious knowledge?"

"Yes," they said.

"Do you think we can get it? That it is a certain knowledge?"

They answered "Yes."

"But," said Ruth, "you would want it proved."

I used the word "faith," and the children rightly objected, because, they said, faith could be used to express the most superstitious of mythical beliefs. One must *know*.

"I mean self-evident knowledge," I said. "If today the priests and the myths are dead, if we are to have a democratic religion, then each one of us must

be a prophet. We here to-day, we seven, shall find the unanswerable truth. Shall we?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"How do we know that such truth is to be reached? We do know certain things in ourselves? We know the mystery is there? We know that which we call God?"

"Yes," they said.

"Is there any other reason for believing that the truth can be known?"

Marian said: "In past times some men have known it, we feel certain."

"That is just what I meant, Marian. Such men, you mean, as Moses and Jesus?"

"Yes."

"And we here shall get it. We shall know.

"I believe," I said, "that when we have talked everything over we shall know the truth, and it shall be the same for each."

"In fundamentals, perhaps," said Ruth, "but not in all things."

No religion could be the true religion, we said, if it fostered antagonism or bitterness toward those of another persuasion.

"One would wish to teach them," said Marian.

"Well, then, what *is* the truth? We spoke of the nature of 'God.' What is God, the something we all know and cannot speak?

Henry said: "I could tell better what I mean by

God by saying what is not God." We tried to make him explain.

"Nothing is not God," said Virginia, "everything is God, good and bad, too; and the bad only seems bad to us, but really leads to good."

"Everything is not God," said Ruth, "for God is perfect, and we are imperfect, and are striving for his perfection. Imperfection and all bad things are not of God."

"What are they, then?" I asked. "Surely you do not believe in two gods, like the Zoroastrians, in a good and a bad? But the wisest of them saw that the two were one."

Ruth answered: "I have it at home in a book, how evil came into God's world, although we are of him and he is perfect. I will bring it next time. I don't remember it."

"Yes, do bring it. But I believe that as long as we are not perfect, God is not perfect."

"That seems," answered Ruth, "as if we were God."

"So we are a part of God, who is the whole. Anything else is unthinkable. And unless we are perfect, how can He be perfect?"

The children corrected me, for I had used the wrong word.

"God must be perfect," they said, "if we long for that perfection."

Virginia said: "If the world is ever to be perfect,

then it is perfect now. Whatever shall be is here now, is here forever."

"You are right," I answered, "I should not have used that word."

Henry said: "The apple-tree might be perfect, but the apples might still be unripe."

"Yes," I went on, "but the apple-tree would not be perfect unless the apples ripened."

"The world is like a rose-bud," said Alfred. "It is perfect as a bud, and yet it must open and evolve in its perfection."

"Yes," I said, "or like a sleeper who awakens.

"Now, then," I asked, "you do all believe in progress; that the world changes and that it changes in a certain direction?"

"I don't know," said Virginia. "I believe that the world, that God, must always be the same, even though it change."

"That is true, and it is a strange paradoxical truth, which I hope to make you understand later on, that all things change and progress, yet are ever the same, even as the rose-bud that unfolds."

We had tacitly admitted that God and the aim of life stood for love and unity. Once when Henry spoke of the "fear" of God, the others corrected him.

"Now," I said, "if there is progress, what is it?"

Ruth answered: "There is progress of individuals, not of the world. Certain men saw the truth as clearly in old times as they could now."

"I do not believe so," I answered her. "I think the whole must evolve and bud forth, and that it does. Now you all admit that Moses was a prophet who saw the truth?"

They said "Yes."

"But he felt enmities. Jesus was a greater prophet than Moses. In what was he greater?"

"In his realization not only of the unity of God, but of the unity and divinity and love of man."

"If Moses were here to-day," I asked, "in what might he be greater than he was in his own time?"

Florence said: "He would have all the advantages of culture since then."

"That would not make him greater."

Marian answered: "You mean the democracy of to-day, the realization of the brotherhood of all men."

"Yes," I said, "that is just what I mean. When I look at history, I can see no progress but this. Automobiles, electricity, scientific knowledge, these are not progress except as they lead to that other progress. We do understand our fellowmen better than we ever did. We can—some of us—call every savage our brother. That is the clear progress throughout history."

The children were impressed by this fact.

"Then you mean," said Ruth, "that universal love is the object of life?"

"Yes," I said, "but I am afraid to use the word 'love,' for it might mean blind love, and I mean understanding love."

"Of course," said the children.

"You mean love of mankind?" asked Marian.

"Yes," I said, "but individual love, too; and perhaps more than both of these."

"I still believe," said Ruth, "that progress is only for the individual, and that it doesn't matter whether we progress here or hereafter. Personal love is selfish. We want divine love."

I answered her: "I will not speak now of hereafter. But here and now, to-day, do we not want at once the thing that we want?"

"Yes," they said.

"Then, now and here we mean to go forward, as far as we can, and now and here we will love men with our might, because that is the human way and the human progress."

"It does seem to me, from books," said Virginia, "that people are less mean, selfish and jealous than they were a hundred years ago."

Marian smiled over to her. "You have been reading Thackeray," she said.

"But," said Virginia, "all people are not progressing together, for though we should find the truth now, many others will not find it for a long time. The world is like a bunch of roses, in which some are full-blown, and others are small buds."

"Yes," I answered her; "and for the whole to evolve, each bud must be unfolded in beauty."

Now we said many things beside these, but these were the chief trend and conclusions of our thought.

I also told them how every moment was a promise and a fulfillment, a state of the endless whole.

Next Sunday each is to tell me what he or she does mean by the word "God."

The children were enthusiastic, uplifted, whole-hearted in their interest.

Virginia and Alfred, who stayed some time after the others, had a long discussion on good and bad, in which I refused to join.

Virginia said she thought all bad things had good results, and could be used for good.

Alfred answered he was not sure of that, but he believed bad to be a necessary part of good. He said: "If I never felt ill, I could not know I felt well."

Virginia said: "Reason made evil, for when creatures became reasonable they knew that the things they had done before were wrong."

SECOND MEETING

I SPOKE of the name of our club, the Seekers. I said that I thought it expressed exactly what we meant to do.

Ruth answered that to her it seemed the only possible, natural name.

Then I read aloud Virginia's account of the last meeting:

"A great many people think themselves too educated to believe in any of the established religions, and then don't take the trouble to find out what they really think and what their true religion is. People have a wrong idea of the meaning of the word 'religious.' Consequently, as they don't know what it means, they cannot *be* it. Many people who go to church or temple every Sabbath, and sleep, or take note of the different costumes of the congregation during the sermon, consider themselves religious.

"We decided that we all believed in the unity of God. The truth has always been apparent to some, such as Moses and Jesus, and some of the Oriental priests. The two former tried to give the true idea to the people, but failed, as they were too poetical, and the people believed too literally. The latter tried to keep the people in ignorance, as it gave them

power, and they therefore told the people what they themselves knew to be untruths.

"We differed somewhat in our idea of God. Some thought he was all good and had no evil. I think he is all good, but I also think that all evil is his, but that every evil has a good motive and a good end.

"No idea, no matter how surprising and new it may seem, is new. It has always been, although it has never been thought. The world is like a great bunch of rosebuds, each perfect as a bud, but not developed. Every beautiful idea, when it is thought, is a petal unfolding and revealing *more* perfect petals beneath. Thus one fine idea brings forth another.

"I think a great many people do not know what they think. If you ask a person belonging to one of the established religions what they believe, I think their answer would be vague. Formerly, these religions were very useful, as they made people love good. Now they prevent people from thinking, and make them dependent. They depend on others to make their beliefs and thoughts, when their brains should be, and probably are, fertile enough to think for themselves."

I said that was just what I wanted, and I hoped to have one such paper each week.

I said I believed that after we had spoken of God, and decided what we meant, and all agreed, we would not often use the word God, because it was so nearly unspeakable, so vast and holy, that we would take it as a natural background to our thought.

"You know," I said, "how in the old Jewish temples the name of God was mentioned only once a year."

"And then only by the priest," Henry added.

"But if we want to talk of God we shall have to use his name," said Ruth. The others seemed to agree with her.

"The personal significance always clings to the name of God," Marian said; "but what other word can one use?"

"Perhaps it would be better," suggested Henry, "to use some such other word as All-powerful One."

Virginia said that to her the word God had no personal significance.

Ruth thought we might use the impersonal word "Good." I answered her that every attribute, even good, was limiting, and God was limitless.

I saw that they did not in the least understand what I meant, that they could not until we went further. So I said:

"I think that after we know what we mean by the word God, you will understand why we shall not want, and not need, to use it."

Then I asked them what they meant by God.

Virginia said: "God is the whole, good and bad, only what seems bad is really good. Or God is, rather, every feeling, every emotion."

Henry said God was everything good, but that everything *was* good, and bad only seemed bad to us.

Alfred said: "I don't think bad is good, but I think that God must be everything, anyway."

Marian tried to say that God is the vast unknown —something, which we know because we feel it.

Florence said: "I spoke to brother Arthur about it, and I now think that God is sympathy; that is, sympathy and understanding of our fellow-men; and as we reach that, we get to God."

The others were surprised and startled by this explanation. I said I knew what Florence meant, but that she had not been able to express it clearly.

Then Ruth said that she agreed with Henry. She called God spirit.

"Yes," I answered, "if we take spirit to mean everything. For we know nothing except through our senses, our consciousness, our understanding; so that all we know is knowledge of spirit."

They all agreed to that.

"Now," I said, "I believe God to be in each of us, to be the self within us, and within all others, and within the universe; to be the knowledge, the light and the understanding. I can explain to you what I mean by reading a passage from the Indian Vedas, which seems to me so true, and so exactly what I want to say, that I could not explain it so well myself." Then I read the following:

"In the beginning was Self alone. Atman is the Self in all our selves—the Divine Self concealed by his own qualities. This Self they sometimes call the Undeveloped. . . . The generation of Brahma

was before all ages, unfolding himself evermore in a beautiful glory; everything which is highest and everything which is deepest belongs to him. Being and not being are unveiled through Brahma. . . . How can any one teach concerning Brahma? He is neither the known nor the unknown. That which cannot be expressed by words, but through which all expression comes, this I know to be Brahma. That which cannot be thought by the mind, but by which all thinking comes, this I know is Brahma. That which cannot be seen by the eye, but by which the eye sees, is Brahma."

They liked this so well, and said it expressed their feelings so truly, that I offered to copy it for each one of them. Marian said she did not understand what was meant by "concealed by his own qualities."

I answered: "We know God only because of the universe which we see and feel."

"Yes," she said.

"But just that the universe," I went on, "conceals God, is a mystery as well as a revelation."

"I don't quite understand," said Marian.

"It is like a great light," I said, "which is so bright that it dazzles you, and you cannot look at it."

"Like the sun," said Virginia.

"I think I see what you mean," Marian answered.

"I continued: "Moses spoke of God in that same way, as the vast Self: 'And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am; and he said, Thus shalt thou say

unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.'

"And so," I went on, "myself and yourself, the self of every man and the self of the universe, that is God."

With delightful frankness they said that they liked it better as it was put in "that thing on Brahma."

"So do I," I answered. "We know only self. Is it not so?"

"I don't like the word 'self,' " said Ruth; "it is too limited. I think only of my little self."

Marian agreed. Virginia said that to her it seemed the true word, that she felt the whole as a vast self. "But isn't it more?" she asked. "God is feeling. When I ride in an open trolley, and the wind blows in my face, and the trees blow, and the clouds move in the sky, then the feeling that it gives me I call God."

"Isn't it self, within yourself?" I asked.

"Yes, it is," she answered.

"Now," I said, "we are little, incomplete, limited creatures, but we need the whole universe to be complete. The whole universe is the rest of self, the rest of myself. That is what I mean by God, and in that sense I am a part of God."

All the children agreed at once, as if this were the thing they had wanted to hear said. This first definite statement that I made seemed to us all unanswerably true.

Immediately they went on to speak of good and bad; but I stopped them, thus:

"There is one other thing I would like to make clear first, a historic question, but one that leads to the question of good and bad. What did the most illumined and inspired polytheists mean by their many gods?"

Marian answered: "They meant many aspects of the one God."

"Just so, Marian. But now do you know the inner meaning of Trinity?"

None of them knew, and all seemed particularly interested and anxious to understand. "I never understood," said Marian, "what was meant by the Holy Ghost."

I said to them: "I will tell you what it has always meant to me, and to some others beside me, and you can see whether it seems true to you. To me the three are as parts of one. They are the contrast, such as man and God, good and bad, even night and day, and the understanding, the unity that makes these two one."

This needed much explanation. It was all summed up thus: The three in one—the triangle with three sides, which is still one—are: Myself, the other self, which I love and need for my completion, and the love and understanding which pass between us and make us one. Virginia said that she never thought of herself and the other self, that to her they were

one. The idea was very new to them all, and did not at once convince them.

"Now," I said, "we see, however, that opposites are really one; and so I believe that good and bad are parts of the same thing. I believe that everything called bad is the price of going forward, of progress, that bad things are made by good things. Suppose that the world were in utter darkness, that no light were anywhere, then there would be no darkness, either. But the first flame of light would create the darkness."

As I developed this idea, the children said very little, only asking me questions, until I had finished. This is how I explained it: We all believe—we seven here—that the good is understanding, love, the complete Divine Self, and everything which leads thereto is good. Then everything bad is that which does not lead thereto; or, rather, that is called bad which has not gone so far as the rest. So that the bad is not an actual state—in this I agree with Ruth—but is a condition of good. All pains are growing pains. Things are bad only because we already have something better. The other day I heard Virginia saying that when reason came into the world, creatures first knew the bad; because they saw that the life they had lived was a bad life. So, you see, everything bad is something which we feel to be behind us, not equal to our best knowledge. Pain and badness are the price of progress, and we would rather go forward and suffer than stand still and be com-

fortable. We long to go forward to the good, to the vast self of complete understanding. "A criminal," I said, "may be a man who would have been good if he had lived in savage times among savages, but at present he is bad because we are ahead of him."

"Then a bad man," said Henry, "is one who is behind his times, or else ahead of them."

"Oh, no," they protested, "not ahead of them!"

"No," I answered, "but the man ahead of his time, who is better than his time, may appear to be a criminal. You must see that the man who believes in the eternal good, who knows that he is going toward unity and complete love, is in a sense above the human law, and must discover his own laws. He may be a criminal in the eyes of others."

"Give us an example," they said.

"Jesus is one example. He was crucified as a criminal."

"Because," said Henry, "he broke the Roman law. He refused to worship their images, and he called himself King of the Jews."

"And they did not know," I answered, "in what sense he called himself King, so they had to crucify him as a traitor. Can't you think of some other example? Of course, there were all the heretics of old times."

Alfred and Henry said that Roosevelt was in a sense an example, because he had been much blamed for exposing the truth and hurting business; but that the hurt was an essential part of progress and good.

Ruth said: "Surely it is better to expose the truth and suffer for it, than to go on in falsehood."

I gave as another example the Russians, with whom, a short time ago, it was a crime to educate the peasants; and I told how brave men and women had been sent to Siberia for breaking the law in this respect.

"But," I said, "this is a dangerous subject, and truly, we ought not to have mentioned it until we could probe it to the bottom. For surely in a democratic state one of the essential inner laws is that we shall obey the law which our fellows have made."

"If a law seems wrong to a man," said Henry, "he can try to change it, but meantime he must obey it. For instance, a man might believe in free trade, but still he would have no right to smuggle in goods."

"One ought to obey school-laws, I suppose," said Marian.

"Surely," I answered, "for the school is an institution you enter from choice, and if you don't like the laws you can protest by leaving. But if there were a law unjust to your fellows, you would disobey it. Still, even then, the best way to protest would be by a strike of the students."

They had a long discussion on the great crime of whispering in school, in which I scarcely joined, as I refuse to be a petty preacher to them. But I tried to explain to them why it was so hard for them to obey these little laws.

"It is," I said, "because you did not help to make

the laws yourselves, that you are tempted to break them out of mere mischief. Still, you would not lie about it, but rather do it openly, because you feel that truth between individuals is an inner law, the first step toward understanding. You know I believe that, even unconsciously, we have all always striven for this unity, this completeness that now we are going to strive for with open eyes."

"And all bad leads in the same direction, and comes to good," said Virginia.

"Now I want you to understand that clearly," I said. "All bad things are bad only because they do not reach up to our idea of the best. But that bad things are turned to good, or used for good is because *we* use them so; because the desire and the striving for good is so strong within us, that we use them to fulfil that desire. It is not a necessity. It is a matter of choice. If we wish, we can use everything for good. And we often do so, even unconsciously. Everything strives toward that good, which is life itself."

"Then you believe," said Marian, "that even every criminal has some good in him?"

"Yes, surely," I answered, "else he would not be here, alive, at all. Every living being is good; and if he is not so far as we at present, he may go farther than we some day. Surely, we will take him onward with us, else we cannot be complete. You must see that any one who believes the great good to be understanding love and unity, cannot be made whole

till every one is made whole with him. He needs all the world."

"Every one must feel that," said Marian.

"The other day, Marian," I went on, "you said: 'If we can never reach the goal, what is the good of anything?' Now, I, for one, believe in infinite good; I believe that no matter how far we go, we shall long to go farther, so that what now would seem unimaginably good to us might one day seem bad. Can you imagine stagnant perfection?"

"I think," said Marian, "that a perfectly good world would be terribly monotonous."

"That is what I think, too," I answered. "What we love is the going forward, the achieving, the striving."

Henry said: "It is like travelling toward the horizon, and we think that is the end. But when we reach it, we see another horizon."

Ruth asked: "How can we strive for anything, if we don't expect to reach it? Is not God what we long to reach? Is not God the ideal?"

"Is not God, the real, here, now?" I answered her. "I cannot understand Infinity or Eternity, so I say Infinity is here and Eternity is now, because I am always here and now. So I cannot understand infinite good and unity, but I know that here and now I must strive for it, and that the constant striving, and getting more and ever more, is my greatest joy. Now, Ruth, do you admit that we cannot go forward alone, that all must go together to be complete?"

"Yes."

"Then the whole is one, and every man and creature is a part of me."

"If every one believed that," said Marian, "how different, how much better the world would be! People could not criticize each other."

"*I* think it would," I said, "and I am glad you think so, too; for if every one believed that, no one could condemn another, any more than you could condemn your own sore finger. You might say: 'My finger is sore,' but you wouldn't say: 'My finger is very wicked, and I hate it.' "

"I believe that," said Marian. "I am convinced mentally, but I don't feel it. I don't think that I could live it yet."

Virginia asked whether she might say for us "Abou ben Adhem," which expressed our idea of man and God. And she said it for us. We were all silent for a few moments. Then I said: "And the love of even more than man, of all creatures, of all the world."

Marian admitted that she did not love animals. Ruth said she did. Marian seems distressed by the fact that she cannot be perfect at once. That is what she means when she says she is mentally convinced, but doesn't feel it yet. Alfred feels the same lack. These ambitious children!

"Now," I said, "I want you to feel certain and convinced of each thing as we go on. We all agree at present, don't we?"

"Yes," they answered.

"I feel as if something must be wrong, because we all agree," I went on, "and yet I know you are independent thinkers. Are you sure that all bad is a condition of good, even all physical bad, such things as accidents and loss? For instance, railroads are of value—why?"

None knew the true reason but Ruth. She said they brought nations together.

"And the accidents on railroads," I said, "are the price of that progress, a price we have to pay for perfecting that system. It would be better to avoid all accidents—as I hope we shall do one day—but, meanwhile, we would rather take the risk than not have railroads. No one can be convinced, however, that all bad is a condition of good, until tried."

"I have been tried," answered Virginia.

They all thought themselves convinced, except Alfred. He said: "It might be true nine times, but the tenth time it might not be true."

"Then," said Henry, "you would believe it were true the tenth time, even though you didn't understand how."

"No," I answered; "he would test it the tenth time. We will *know* each thing."

Now we re-examined our conviction on all these questions, and went over each point again. We probed the possibilities of atheism, and saw that no one who faced things could be an atheist, that atheism was the result of laziness, fear or vanity. Either a

man feared to face the truth, or could not bear to admit how little he knew. And he saw that an atheist might be a very good man, only he would build his morality on a philosophy he did not understand or examine. We might be good without any religious convictions, but this conviction, this belief, would give us a reason for goodness, and make us strong in the face of uncertainty, temptation and trial. Henry said things were worth while only when they were hard to do.

"There," said I, "you have a proof of our instinctive feeling that pain is a necessary part of progress."

Virginia said she wanted to believe what would make her happy; that she would choose the optimistic faith. I answered her I wanted to believe the truth, happy or unhappy, but I had come to the conclusion at last that the truth was very good. I told them how at their age I had been in great doubt, how I had thought the truth might be very bad.

"Pain is real," I said, "but we will not fear to face that, or anything bitter, when we know it to be a condition of going onward."

Virginia said I was shaping her thought for her. I reminded her how she used to be my "little disciple." All the others, and especially Marian, said that this meeting was far more satisfying than the last; that we had reached something definite. Marian said: "I seem to see already what we will have to say on every subject, but we shall have no end of things to speak of."

THIRD MEETING

FLORENCE and Henry were delayed and did not arrive until after four. But before that we had already gathered about the table, and found it hard to restrain ourselves from beginning the discussion. I said to the children that I thought we would not speak of immortality to-day, as there was too much that came before. I asked them whether they were anxious to get to it. They were very anxious. Florence said: "It is such an important subject." Ruth said: "I believe we will all agree on immortality." I answered her that just there I thought we might disagree most. Marion said she had definite ideas on the subject. I can see that Henry has indefinite and theological ideas.

I then read aloud the little paper Marian had written on our talk of the previous week:

"On Sunday, October 18th, our club, the Seekers, held its second meeting. We first discussed our ideas of God. We reached the conclusion that God is our divine self, that through God we can perceive, but we cannot perceive God. This seems to me a very beautiful idea. I think our discussion on this subject was particularly nice, because we did not try

to limit God by any attributes, for he is infinite. We also discussed progress. I understood it much better this week than last. The aim of progress is to reach a clear understanding of our fellow-beings; we hope that, sometime, there will be sympathy and understanding among all men, for we each have a divine self, which will not reach perfection until it is in perfect accord with all the other people's. We discussed good and evil, and decided that evil is that which we outgrow, and which might once have seemed good, but which now seems bad because we have found something better. Good is the progress that we are making toward our goal of common understanding. Unhappiness and accidents, etc., are incidental to progress, and will occur less and less frequently. I enjoyed this meeting of the club very much."

We now reviewed all the conclusions we had reached. Then I was glad to have them speak once more of good and bad, and ask many questions. Ruth said she was not sure of being convinced. She said: "I talked it over with mother. It seems to me I sometimes put my thought into your words, and imagine you have said what I mean, when perhaps you haven't. Please repeat that again, about good and bad." Ruth is always afraid she may be weakening in her own ideas, and tries not to be convinced. I strove to impress upon her that my idea might include hers.

I said: "You see now that the thought I want to

give you is an unanswerable religion, which is not new, but larger than all the old beliefs."

Marian asked: "Large enough to include them all?"

"Yes, just that. Did you ever think of the old word, holiness, h-o-l-i-n-e-s-s? I know another word that to us would mean holiness, a different holiness."

"You mean w-h-o-l-e?" said Marian.

"Yes, to be whole and complete."

Now as we spoke again of good and bad, we came upon the interesting question of disease.

"How can that be explained as a part of progress?" asked Marian.

Virginia, with her usual misconception on this subject, said that disease helped us forward because through it scientists came to know and understand many things about life. Henry, still more off the track, said that disease led to a knowledge of medicine.

"Henry's idea," I answered, "we cannot consider, because, of course, the only virtue of medical skill is that it cures disease, and if there were not disease we would not need medical progress. But Virginia's idea is true in a certain sense. It is quite true that disease impelled people to use the microscope, to discover themselves physically, to learn of the infinitude of minute creatures in the universe; and so it led to a larger knowledge of life, because the infinitely little makes our world just as vast as the infinitely big. But this only shows that we made progress out of

disease, as we make progress out of all things, because the will of life, the will to go forward, is within us. It does not show how disease itself can be the result or price of progress. That is a difficult question, but I seem to see it clearly, and I will try to explain it to you. None of you, except perhaps Virginia and Alfred, have a clear idea of evolution, and I would like to spend one meeting in explaining it, because it is so essential. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," they said.

"But I can't go into this question of disease without explaining something of evolution to you now. I will try to make it clear: Each individual is different. As animals progressed and went forward, those parts which were newest were also more unstable, because they were ready to change more. These parts were most apt to become diseased, or, rather, weakened, because progress might be in any direction, and had to feel its way." It was difficult for me to explain this to the children, who were so utterly unprepared, and I said much more. Even so, I don't think Marian and Ruth understood it thoroughly, and I shall have to repeat it when we speak of evolution. I said I did not believe the germs of disease ever entered any part unless that part were weakened or imperfect. I said: "Take as an example the human brain. Suppose that two children were born with brains slightly different from others. One might turn out to be a genius, and the other to be eccentric and even insane, because progress feels its way in all directions. So

disease, coming to the new unstable parts, would be the necessary cost of progress."

Virginia said: "Young and new things are always most delicate. I had a palm with many leaves, and one was new. Now, the palm was left for a day against the window pane, and the young leaf died from the pressure of the glass, which did not at all hurt the old leaves." This poetical and delightful little figure of speech made me wonder whether Virginia understood just what I meant.

We went over the question of good and bad, to Ruth's satisfaction. And then I asked Henry, whose understanding of it I doubted, to tell me in what three ways the bad was a part of good and progress. His answer was clear and true:

"There is the bad, which is only bad because we now possess or know something better, the old good we have left behind us. Then there is the bad which is the direct result of progress and growth, such as accidents and disease. Then there is the use of bad which we make, to turn it into good, such as the knowledge we get from it, and, as Virginia said before, the sympathy and love which grow out of misfortune."

"Now," I said, "I would like some of you to tell me what you mean by those two words, matter and spirit."

Henry, Virginia and Ruth were the only ones ready to answer.

Henry said that spirit is the soul. He quoted from

a Sunday-school formula: "The spirit of man is in the image of God, and immortal."

I said that those words did not mean anything definite to me. They might be true, but I did not understand them. Ruth said she did, and it was what she meant; that matter was, like the bad, something to be overcome and left behind.

"I think," said Virginia, "that matter is the tool of spirit; the body is the servant of the mind."

They began to argue, but I stopped them, saying: "I will first tell you what I think. Is there any matter without form? Has not all matter form, and is it not, therefore, as it were, something like an idea in the mind?"

Henry wanted to deny this, but thought a moment, and admitted that all matter had some form.

I went on: "I am a spirit, that is, a self; and I know things only in my spirit, because I see, hear, touch them. So I don't believe in matter, so called, at all. I think that our forms, our bodies, and all forms in the universe are an expression of spirit or self." I said expression was the means for reaching unity, that creatures could not come together unless they expressed themselves to each other, and that I believed all expression was for this purpose. I said, what is called matter, the material conditions of life, are the result of the action of spirit; our bodies, which seem so solid and material, are constantly changed, are not at all the same as matter, but only in form; we are reborn each day according to the spirit. I

said that in this sense matter, so-called, was indeed something we were constantly leaving behind us, that every material condition was the result of a previous state of mind. This is true of all human things, and we cannot help thinking it is true of universal things. We know that fire burns, that planets whirl through space, that water runs, and we cannot help feeling these expressions of force to be the expression of something akin to will and spirit.

Virginia said, then there must be something much more than human sympathy and understanding, which we long to reach. I answered, I believed so, but I had not wanted to suggest it to them.

I said that all our present bodily conditions, the seemingly unalterable conditions called material, were the expression of will and spirit in the past, either of ours or others; that our very existence here, the existence of everything, was the result of will and desire.

Marian said: "I don't think it is just that we should suffer and be, because of another's will and spirit."

Virginia answered: "It *is* fair. We are part of the whole."

"That is so," said Marian. "Of course." It was a full and sufficient answer.

I said I believed that disease could be prevented, even if not cured, by thought, because will and desire controlled the body. I said: "We have our own destiny in our hands, we are free to do as we choose with the future, because will shapes everything." I

was delighted to find that the children had never heard the silly discussions about free will, and did not have to have that bugbear driven out. I said: "We are a part of the will of life."

As another illustration of idea coming before form, I spoke of plants and seeds, how in the seed is the possibility, the idea of an infinity of trees.

Virginia said: "In them spirit seems to be asleep, for it must be there." She said all things slept sometimes, and while they slept the spirit worked in them.

Ruth was not in the least convinced. Indeed, the thing was not overclear. She said: "I still think matter is something to be overcome, something that binds us. Surely we will sometime be spirits without matter, altogether spiritual."

I tried to show them that spirit without expression would be unthinkable, that though expression might not be what we call matter, it would still be some expression. I said: "Expression frees us."

That was puzzling, and needed more explanation.

I asked Henry: "What is the object and aim of life?"

He answered vaguely: "I suppose it is spirit."

"Now, what do you mean by that?" I asked.

He answered: "I suppose we don't know what it is until we reach the truth." Evidently he did not, but all the others did. They all spoke at once to explain to him that the object of life was complete understanding and love.

I said: "That is what expression is to get for us,

for we express ourselves in form and thought, so that we may understand and be understood. And that is what I meant by freedom. I meant understanding, love and perfect adjustment. In one sense matter is binding, because we want more freedom. Matter, so called, is the physical condition which our will made in the past, and which we want already to surpass. Suppose that a man wrote a book in which he put all his ideas, and that when he finished the book he was forbidden to write or speak again; his ideas would grow afterward, and as he could not express them, he would think himself limited and bound by the book he had written. So material conditions are binding only because we want still more freedom, though they themselves were freedom at the time of their creation. In that sense, Ruth, you might call the body something which the spirit constantly wants to leave behind, because it is creating new forms for itself."

Marian said: "It is as if there were a house with many rooms, and we thought we wanted to go only into the first; but each door made us long for the next room, and the next, so that we could never be satisfied."

"And if one door were locked," I said, "we would consider ourselves sadly bound, though we had thought we wished to go only so far. Suppose a man made a statue, that statue would be an expression of his spirit. But if the next instant he wanted to change it, to make, say, the lines of the arm more

perfect, he could not do so by willing. He would have to make a new statue."

"But that is different," said Ruth. "The stuff he works in is still matter."

I tried to explain how all creation is an interchange of form, a flowing and influence. I tried to show them how all things whatsoever, even thoughts, are forms, and all form an expression.

Virginia said: "Those who write books, or do any great work, are immortal in that, because of their influence." I answered her that all of us were immortal in this sense, that each thing had endless influence.

Marian asked the one unanswerable question, and I was delighted. She said: "Why was the Divine Self ever divided? How did we ever happen to need bodies and expression? Why did it not all grow together?"

She saw that contrast was needed for recognition. But why, she wondered, was anything at all? I answered her: "We said the other day that it did not matter whether the search for good were infinite or not. Neither does it concern us to know the unknowable, whether or how the awaking world began. But we do know it is awakening, what is the direction, what is the aim and desire of life. To me no more seems needed. We know how to go forward."

"That is true," she said. She spoke of old age and mental decay. She said she did not see why people lost, for no reason, the progress they seemed

to have made. I answered her that I did not think they lost it, unless they did not try to keep it; that it is a thing one must work for at each moment.

"But why do they stop trying?" she asked.

"I don't think they stop," I said. "I think they never did try, but in youth such people merely had more stimulation from without."

"Now, my grandfather," she said, "was an intelligent man, and he is losing his memory."

"Is he losing the valuable thing? Does he love you less, understand you less? Are you sure the memory he is losing is the thing he still needs?"

She saw what I meant. She was struck by it.

I went on: "One might lose the ability to do mathematics, when one had gained all there was to be got out of mathematics."

She said: "I think you are right. I understand that."

Now when Ruth insisted again that matter was something binding, something to be left behind, Alfred said:

"I don't think it is binding."

"Neither do I," said Virginia.

"Neither do I," said I, "for we can always express ourselves in a new way. The man who has written a book is not dumb afterward."

The meeting was very short and unsatisfactory. I believe that the children went home disappointed, for I could see that we had not got at anything that the children had not understood. Since then Virginia's

mother told me that Virginia did not enjoy it as much as the other meetings; that it was too deep for her. Florence's "big brother Arthur" told me that she, too, did not enjoy it as much, and that when he questioned her she seemed to understand clearly only the fact that there was no sharp distinction between mind and matter. Otherwise, as he put it, she "talked woolly." During the meeting she yawned once.

Well, then, this meeting was a failure. As such, I want to use it. What was the cause? Of course, one of the chief causes was the difficulty of the subject, and yet the unavoidability of it. How could I go on to speak of immortality to children with such absurd notions? I don't think it could be "skipped." Of course, I would at first suppose that my method of tackling the subject was at fault. It may be so, but at present I can think of no other method. I think that the real and remediable cause of the difficulty was this: That the children did not have a good enough conception of the philosophy of science, actual knowledge of cosmic facts, to understand my point of view. I should have had the talk on evolution first. To remedy this as much as possible, I am going to have the talk on evolution next. To speak of immortality now would cause still more confusion. I await next Sunday with some uncertainty and doubt. For the next meeting must be good, or the club will be a failure. We must learn by experience, they as well as I. I will go forward with courage, if my little army does not fail me.

If I were giving again the talk on matter and spirit, I would do it differently. I would not say "matter is the expression of spirit," but "matter is the medium through which spirit expresses itself." For matter is something, though we know not what, and never know it except as form, which seems to us always an expression of will. But we know that, whatever it be, it passes from one controlling will to another. (Of course, it is too difficult to be discussed in this fashion by boys and girls.)

FOURTH MEETING

After all, the last meeting was not such a failure as I had supposed. I asked Alfred to come earlier, and questioned him before the others arrived. He answered me with precision and common sense. He said: "All matter was once spirit, is the result of spirit." When I said: "What we call matter is the medium through which spirit expresses itself," he answered: "Yes, but spirit expresses itself in other ways, too." "Think a minute," said I, "does it? Can the spirit express itself through any other medium?" "No," he said, after thinking a moment, "no, of course not." "Nor," said I, "do we at all know matter except through the intellect." I told him that I wanted to speak to him alone because he was so silent at the club. Then Henry arrived. He said he enjoyed the last meeting very much, and thought he understood it all. The paper he wrote proved that he understood far better than I had supposed:

"To-day we first went over what we had said last week. The question arose as to which class of evil disease belongs. We came to the conclusion that it is the result or price of progress. We also spoke about the idea of a trinity. We had said at the last

meeting that God is a divine self within us, and that when we know each other we will know God. Connecting each one of us to the other, there is a feeling of sympathy; a third element. That is to say, there is you, and myself, and, making the third part, that sympathetic understanding which brings us closer together.

"The chief topic to-day was that of Matter and Spirit. At first there was a little difference of opinion, but we finally agreed that in reality everything is spirit, and that which we call matter is only the expression of the spirit. As an example we took the sculptor, who, getting an idea through the mind, expresses this spirit in a statue, which we call matter. We speak of the body as matter, but it is spirit, in as much as it is the medium through which the spirit manifests itself."

When I told the children I had decided to take up evolution before immortality, because evolution was the problem of creation, they were all satisfied and interested.

Then I read aloud Marian's little paper:

"On Sunday, October 25th, the Seekers held a regular meeting. We first reviewed our discussion of the last week, and then took up the subject of Matter and Spirit. Our discussion was long, and the conclusion we reached was that matter is an expression of spirit. In the first place, matter is that which has form or qualities. Every material thing is the expression of a thought. If a man makes a

table, he does so because he wishes to, because it is his will to do so. If he writes a book, that book is an expression of his thought, but it is what is commonly called matter. Matter is, in short, a result of spirit, is an expression of spirit. Our bodies are the expression of our minds, and the way in which we express ourselves to each other. If our bodies are not perfect, if they are diseased, it is merely that our minds have not advanced far enough to express the perfect body. Our talk this week helped me a great deal. Although we did not cover much ground, we reached a conclusion on one of the most difficult subjects, and I think almost every one was convinced."

Ruth said she had thought all the week of what I had told them, and that she was sure she agreed with me now. The children's thoughts seem to develop during the week, as if they shaped afterward, and slowly, all that had been said.

Virginia disagreed with Marian, that the perfect mind would make the perfect body. She said: "People with perfect bodies are often fools. And sickly people are often the most intelligent and fine spirited."

Marian and Ruth both protested, but could not express themselves. So I said: "That is true. But still I believe the perfect mind would have the perfect body. Our bodies may be imperfect for several reasons: Perhaps we are suffering for the wrong spirit of our ancestors, through heredity. Or, again, the body which may be good enough, and quite perfect, even, with the fool's mind, might not be strong

enough for the active mind. That mind would have to create for itself a more perfect body. So, you see, our bodily imperfections are the price of progress. Our upright position, for instance, which is so great a help to the mind, is a strain on the body, and the cause of many of our ills."

Ruth said: "I think our bodies will become so much better than they are now, that the best we know now will seem very poor."

Virginia had written a little paper, which seemed to me at the first reading so vague and uncomprehending, that I did not wish to read it aloud. I was glad I did read it aloud, however, as her explanation and interpretation of herself showed that she understood. This is the paper:

MY IDEA OF MATTER

"Matter is a part of mind. Without it there would be no improvement of the mind. Mind, without matter, would be like a stunted child. It would still exist, but it would not grow. It seems as if matter were the medium between mind and progress."

Virginia said that was her own idea, whether we agreed or not. It means, according to Virginia, that matter is the medium of expression of mind, and that mind could not grow without this medium. Very good, it seems to me; and we do agree.

I said, and Ruth and Henry joined me, that one

must make a distinction, for convenience, at least, between the words "spirit" and "matter." Marian said they had been separated so long, so completely and so foolishly, that she was glad to dwell upon their sameness.

Now I went on to speak of evolution.* I showed them how the theory of evolution, or descent from a common ancestor or ancestors, was a creation theory, just as much as Genesis was a creation theory.

I said: "There is no reason why you should believe this any more than any other history, or story, unless the proofs convince you."

Alfred and Virginia said it was a reasonable, convincing theory. Marian saw what I meant, and, not knowing so much as they, asked for the proof.

I first gave them the proof of likeness of structure, and showed them pictures of the resemblances of bone and organ structure in various animals. Ruth said she was quite sure all little babies were like monkeys.

Then I gave the proof of the race-likeness of the young. (Examples and illustrations.)

Then that of rudimentary organs. (Examples and illustrations.)

Virginia suggested the geological proof in the finding of fossils. I enlarged on this, and spoke of series of living and extinct shells, etc.

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*For examples and illustrations I used the first volume of Romanes' "Darwin and After Darwin" as more convenient and compact than Darwin himself.

I traced the general progress of evolution, the division into groups and branches.

I told them—what some knew—that evolution was an ancient, philosophical theory, and only the method of evolution Darwinian. Some of them said Darwin's name always made them think of monkeys.

I now went on to explain Darwin's theory of natural selection; spoke of variation in all directions as the law of life; then explained the struggle for food and place, and then protective colorings, and consequent elimination. The children gave as many examples and instances as myself. Then I went on to tell what artificial selection had been able to do, and showed a group of pictures of the dog, domesticated from a wolf-like animal. The pictures included prize bulldogs, St. Bernards, French poodles, tiny Japanese dogs and great Danes.

Now Florence, who has just had instruction in evolution by her helpful big brother, said:

"But a great many scientists no longer accept natural selection and the survival of the fittest as an explanation of development. There is the theory of isolation, too."

"Yes," I said, "and I am one of those who believe in natural selection only in part, but I wanted you to hear it all. Florence, explain the effect of isolation to us."

She explained it, and gave a very good example, that of some birds in a species having stronger wings than others, and so flying farther to nest.

When I asked what any theory of the process of evolution failed to explain, Ruth answered "immortality." I told her that evolutionary theories did not attempt to explain that.

I showed them how no theory explained change itself, explained the initial variation. I showed them, too, the limits of natural selection. When I took the eye as an example of a specialized organ too complex to be easily accounted for by natural selection, I found them hard to convince, because they did not realize the complexity of the eye. But when I spoke of the life and death value of any organic change as necessary for its selection, they saw how that limited selection in many ways.

We spoke of the relation of evolution to our idea of life. At once they said it was a proof of progress.

I insisted on its being a self-evolving, a will in life. They saw that. Alfred said: "Could the one-celled creature will; did it know enough?" Marian answered that it was a subconscious will.

Henry said: "Within living things is the inner will. But how about the earth? Isn't there a will outside for other things?"

I answered that even the earth seemed self-impelled; that within the universe seemed to be an immense will, and we were a part of that will; it was our will within us.

I said that creatures could change only because they wanted to be different, because something wanted to be different. I said to change, and to change al-

ways in one direction, was progress; that what we wanted to do, and thought we had done, was to find that direction.

They saw at once how physical death was necessary to race progress, how the old died to make room for the young, and how each newborn creature had new possibilities of progress.

But when I spoke of all the progress of evolution, of even struggle and selection leading toward harmony, fitness and relationship, which is the thing we want, Ruth said:

"I don't see how the lobster killing its fellows because it had a larger claw could lead to harmony and better relationship."

That was a good point. But I scarcely had a chance to answer it, for Marian said that creatures had to develop themselves first.

Then I spoke again, in this relation, of changing standards of good and bad, how what was right for an animal, for the lobster, for instance, was wrong for us. I showed them how all animals were selfish, and had to be selfish and self-evolving alone; how we had to be unselfish only because we realized how vast we were. Marian spoke again of the criminal. She said: "If he were behind us, he, from his own point of view, would not be bad."

"But he would have to be punished," said Ruth, "and made to be good."

"Yes," I answered, "for he is human, and we ex-

pect human actions of him. But we would not dare to blame him."

Henry said we would punish him not as a punishment to hurt him, but to teach him.

We spoke again of diversity as necessary to comprehension, to understanding. I told them I had a whimsical fancy that the first one-celled creature divided because it wanted company. If creatures never divided. and became different, they certainly could never understand each other. Marian said:

"I see now. It is like a girl who had always lived in her own family and developed pretty well there, but the more different people she met the better she would develop."

"Yes," I answered, "unlikeness gives us recognition."

Virginia said: "If we were all one self, life would be uninteresting."

"Yes," said I, "but we might reach a self-conscious self which is unthinkable to us now. There is one way, however, in which evolution helps us, and that is such an obvious way that none of you has thought of it."

For a moment they were puzzled. Then Alfred said: "It is that we are really all one self."

"Oh, I see," said Marian.

"Yes," I answered, "it is that we are all physically related with all life."

Then I went on to say that no one knew how life began, that there were theories, but they might be

no better than fairy tales. They wanted to hear some. I said:

"One theory is that life is eternal in the shape of life-germs, or organic matter, and that these pass from planet to planet throughout the ether forever. But it is only a theory, and a doubtful one."

"I like that theory," said Virginia.

I said I thought beginnings concerned us no more than ends, that all things, histories, science, knowledge, theories concerned us only in so far as they helped us to understand, as they served the large aim of life and showed us how to go. I made Henry repeat again that the aim of life was complete understanding. I said: "To me it is like a measure by which I measure and value all things." We tried to measure various things by it, such as the relative advancement of monkeys, birds and ants, and the greatness of Napoleon and Shakespeare. We came to few conclusions, except that the love of man made man lovable, and that Shakespeare must have been a lover of men.

Henry said: "I think he worked for his own sake, and not for others."

"Yes," I answered; "but he loved and understood his fellows, so he could not help serving them in serving himself. It was his joy."

I said if we had that standard of understanding love, we would need no other morality. I quoted from St. Augustine's Confessions:

"Love God, and do as you please."

"But," I said, "most of us do not love God, or the great good, enough to be able to do as we please without thinking. We still have to stop to measure."

As they were going home, I said: "Next week we will speak of immortality."

"Really, this time?" asked Ruth.

"Now, after this meeting," said Marian, "I am afraid you may tell us, what I have sometimes heard, that we are immortal in the race. Will you?"

"No," I answered, "I will not."

FIFTH MEETING

HENRY said: "I told some one lately about our club and what we did, and he thought we spoke of things that were too deep and philosophical."

"Do you think so?" I asked.

"No," he answered, "of course I don't."

I said: "We are doing something unusual for boys and girls of your age. Most people would think you not able to understand and enjoy it. But I know you do, and you know it."

Marian said: "Why should we not be able to talk of these things in a club, when we certainly do talk of them among ourselves?"

I read Henry's paper:

"To-day we spoke on the theory of evolution. The theory tells us that we are descended from a single, one-celled animal. This animal grew and was divided into several cells, which in turn were divided. We find that when a race of animals needs something with which to protect itself, or with which to get food, that thing usually grows, as in the case of the mother bird, whose feathers are usually the color of the place where she has her nest. In this manner the

one-celled animals may have developed, as the increasing numbers made it harder to get food, and brought other difficulties. Another way in which species may develop is that of isolation. For example, while a flock of birds is flying south to escape the cold, some of the weaker ones are left on the way. Here the cold may cause many feathers to grow, and the other conditions may have such an effect as to develop an entirely new kind of bird. We can also take as an example the different colors of men, caused by the conditions in which they live.

"The disappearance of certain species while others survive is, according to the idea of natural selection, only the survival of the fittest. We find that long ago there were animals larger than any of to-day, but they have completely died out, perhaps because they could not find food, while the smaller, weaker animals have survived because they were better fitted for the conditions. Looking back at history, we can see how at different periods one nation would wipe out another which was weaker, or how one people, more advanced than others, could better protect itself from the elements, and, therefore, lived while others died. The similarity of different animals gives a good foundation for this theory. A baby will often take attitudes exactly like those of a monkey, and while it is young crawl on all fours like animals. Different kinds of animals have bones and all other parts of the body just alike, and also like those of men.

"This theory teaches progression and is therefore useful. It teaches that we were once one, and we should therefore have sympathy with one another."

I next read Florence's paper:

"In our last talk we spoke of evolution and its bearing on progress. I shall simply try to give an idea of what we said about evolution itself. By evolution we mean that we all sprang from a common ancestral source, and have gradually developed into higher and different forms. In general, this change has been from the greatest simplicity, which we find in the one-celled animal, to the highest complexity.

"Darwin, although not the first to advance the theory of evolution, was the first to enlarge and further it. His deductions rest on three main theories—heredity, variation and natural selection. He thought that the offspring always inherited the parents' qualities with something new in its composition. By natural selection Darwin meant the survival of the fittest, that is, that only the most fitted for life should live. In this way the offspring receiving traits from its parents, if they be to its advantage, will live and continue them, and those who have not got them will be killed. In other words, Darwin believed that the terrible struggle for existence, which usually destroys nine-tenths of each generation, must favor those who possess the best variation for their environment; and that these will in turn hand on to their successors these favoring variations. In this next generation

the same process will be repeated, and in this way we get a steady though very gradual advance.

"To-day, however, looking at it broadly, we can see that all heredity and variation need is some way of separating those individuals having some peculiar variation from those who do not possess any. This we call isolation, and it can easily be seen that natural selection is only a subhead under this title. Another form of isolation beside natural selection is geographical.

"Our theories have advanced to this stage, and although it is quite a large move from the original ideas of Darwin, there are many questions still puzzling us, which have yet to be solved."

Then came Marian's paper:

"On Sunday, November 1st, the Seekers held a very interesting meeting. The subject we discussed was Evolution. The very lowest form of life is a one-celled animal. This divides into a two-celled one, which in turn continues to divide and differentiate until it takes the form of a plant or animal. All animals must have had some common ancestor. The proof of this is the existence of rudimentary organs, such as the appendix in man and the bones in the flipper of a whale where we should expect legs. Another proof is to be found in the remains and knowledge we have of prehistoric animals. Some of them were shaped like reptiles, and yet had wings. In connection with evolution, there are the theories of *natural selection* and *isolation*. *Natural selection* is

the belief in the survival of the fittest. For instance, if one lobster happened to grow a large claw, which enabled it to fight better, its young were likely to inherit this tendency, and their young also, etc., until the larger-clawed lobsters, being better able to fight, would kill off most of the others. This theory would not always hold good, however. The theory of *isolation* is very interesting. If, for instance, a bird of one species was born with a longer bill than most of the others, and this bird found a warmer climate was better for it, and, after mating, flew farther south, its young would probably inherit this longer bill, and would also fly farther south than most of the species. Soon they would become entirely separated from the original species, and would become a new class of birds. The connection that *Evolution* has with our work is that evolution is progress and that our aim is progress. Evolution also helps us to understand animals and plants, and to come into a better understanding with nature. Disease is the price of progress. As we progress, one part goes ahead, often at the expense of some other part. Thus disease may be called the price of progress."

Marian admitted that she was rather mixed up about the cells dividing and the long-billed bird going south for his health. But this is doing well for the unscientific Marian, who said a while ago that she did not see how science could have any effect on our view of life.

Then I read Virginia's paper:

THEORY OF EVOLUTION

"The first life that appeared on the earth was a one-celled animal or plant that appeared beneath the water. The germs of life travel through the ether, and wherever there are conditions in which living things can thrive, there they settle. So that was the way in which life began on the earth.

"This one-celled animal, after a while, divided into more cells, and thus became more complicated. When land appeared, land animals and plants came into existence. And these animals became higher and higher. First the animals without a spine, then a more complicated specimen, in the lower forms of vertebrates. Then the reptiles, out of which came two branches, the birds and the immense reptiles of which none have survived that I know of. But out of them came the mammals. And after many thousands of years, man appeared.

"At first man was more like an animal, but after centuries he became less savage. He made implements for himself, and lived in tribes with his fellow men; and the more highly civilized man becomes, the more will he sympathize with the rest of mankind, so that when the highest civilization arrives, it will only mean complete love of all living things."

I insisted that the theory of germ transmission was not a fact. I said she seemed to have avoided natural selection, that I thought she did not like it because it was too mathematical and too logical for her. Ruth

thought perhaps that was why she did not like it much, either, though it interested her. I said: "It seems at first so 'cruel' a theory; it repels us until we remember that what is cruel in a man is not so in a beast." Virginia answered that she did not think it cruel, because it was not meant cruelly. "They had to kill each other," she said. Henry asked me whether I thought it cruel to eat animals. I answered it was not cruel, unless they were cruelly killed. Ruth added that some time we would get beyond the need of eating animals. "To hunt for fun is wicked," said Virginia.

Marian said: "Perhaps we think natural selection not so cruel among animals, because we did not do the suffering."

The children all said they did not remember just what relation evolution had to our idea of life. I answered that the very fact that we could not go on in our thought without it proved its relation, and that we would constantly come back to it, that I did not need to explain it now.

Then we spoke of prayer. I asked each one in turn what and how much they had thought of it.

Alfred said he had never thought of it, that he had prayed as a baby, but had stopped early and never felt the need. Florence said the same. Henry said he believed in prayer, especially in prayer for strength in any undertaking. "Of course," he went on, "I don't expect to be helped against the other fellow, but I get strength in praying for strength"

"I agree with you," said Ruth, "only don't you pray to know whether you are right or not? For you might be wrong."

"If I thought I might be wrong," he answered, "I wouldn't be doing the thing I was doing." They argued it a bit. "But," he went on, "I have no set formula for prayer, nor a definite time."

Virginia said: "I have always prayed. When I was little I got in the habit of saying a silly little German prayer, so that I could not go to sleep without saying something. So when the little prayer seemed too silly to me, I began saying each evening the stanza of a poem."

"What poem?" I asked.

"The last stanza of the 'Chambered Nautilus.' I could not go to sleep unless I said it."

She recited it for us.

Marian said: "It depends on what you mean by prayer. I never learned to say any, nor ever wanted to, but I do have a prayer-feeling."

We all agreed that the prayer which asked for something definite was folly. I said prayer was getting into oneness with the vast Self around and behind us, and drawing strength from that which was ours for the asking, which *was* ourself.

Marian said it was getting into harmony with the world.

We thought every one had that feeling of vastness, of oneness with God, at times. Virginia said she got it especially when she was by the sea.

"I feel it most," said Marian, "when I am out of doors, and feel my close relation with nature."

Henry said he felt it most in a big crowd of people.

"Yes," answered Ruth; "then you feel how little all this is, and the vast, big life above it all."

"You don't mean, Ruth," I asked "that you feel the crowd to be a little thing?"

"Oh, no," she answered. "I feel it in the crowd."

Henry said: "To be among people always arouses that feeling of sympathy."

There are many ways of praying, I said; to speak certain words that aroused in us the prayer-feeling was a good way; but that the words were only to awaken the feeling in us, and were worth nothing by themselves. If one could feel the prayer without any words whatever, it would be just as well. Florence thought it very hard not to get to repeat words by rote. Henry said he always made a particular effort to think of the meaning of the words as he said them.

"I don't believe," said Virginia, "that it is so much thought as feeling. I don't always think of the meaning of those words when I say them, but I get from them the feeling that I must have, to go to sleep."

"And now," I went on, "it seems especially important to get into this frame of mind just before we go to sleep. For during sleep it seems as if the bigger self were working for us. And as we go to sleep, so shall we be next day. I think that if, as you fall asleep, you ask—your vast self—for strength, for

the power to do whatever you know you must do next day, and to solve whatever problems you have to solve, and then get the deep sense of prayer, you usually awaken with the strength you need, and your problems solved. Is it not so?"

Virginia said she always found that if she wanted to learn something, she had only to read it over to herself at night, without learning it, and in the morning, when she awoke, she knew it. Ruth said she found it so; that she always felt next day according to the way she had fallen asleep at night. They had various opinions. Marian said it did not matter how she fell asleep at night; if things went well in the morning, the whole day went well; if ill, then the day went ill. She loves the power of each new day. Alfred said he thought that our brains worked for us in sleep, because then the mind was free from all obstructing thoughts.

I repeated for them a little prayer I had written for a baby:

"Great Lord of life, who lives in me,
And lives in all I know,
With happy thoughts I go to sleep;
And while I sleep I grow.

"I hope to wake this coming morn
More strong, and brave and bright;
While you shall stay, both night and day,
With all I love to-night."

They said it did not seem babyish to them. Henry, especially, liked it, and several of them wished to copy it.

I said one might have the "prayer-feeling," the sense of the whole, so constantly that one would not need to pray, that one's whole life might be a prayer.

The children objected to this, because they thought it would be impossible now, in our imperfect condition. Virginia said: "A person who lived that way would be a perfect saint." Henry thought it would make one cold and unsympathetic.

"How is that possible," I asked, "when it would be a state of constant sympathy and understanding of life?"

"No," said Ruth; "such a person would be too much above us. I don't think one could live so, at present. It would imply a perfection physical and mental that we have not yet reached."

Florence said she not only thought such a state possible, but she believed there were people who lived in this way now, and that she knew such people.

Some one suggested that they must be unspeakably happy.

"No," answered Florence; "not necessarily happy, at all."

I said that I thought such a life would be a state of happiness.

They all agreed; Florence, too, after a moment.

Marian and Henry said they had never met people without limitations. Florence insisted she had;

whereupon Marian called her a hero-worshiper. I said people's limitations were where they failed to understand, and that we none of us understood everything. The sense of oneness would not imply, however, either perfection or apartness or superiority. One might feel everything in this way, whenever one thought of it.

Henry answered: "But how often is one not occupied? Little things distract us constantly."

Marian said: "It means having always the sense of oneness, sympathy and understanding, and always acting, thinking and judging according to that."

"Yes," said I, "and there is another thing that seems to me a prayer. Every creative action; that is, everything we do which brings us into relation with the world, is a prayer because it is an expression of oneness."

Marian said: "It seems as if there were two kinds of prayer, one strength-giving and one strength-getting."

I don't know how we came upon the subject of circles. I said that the smallest things, as well as the largest, were prone to express themselves in a universal way, that every drop of water naturally formed itself into a sphere.

"Yes," said Marian; "and the circle seems to stand for all life."

Now we spoke of immortality. I asked each to tell me what he or she thought.

Virginia did not want to express her opinion. Ruth

and Henry vaguely implied that they believed in immortality. Alfred said:

"I think it is very good for people, if they can believe in it."

"That is not the question," said I. "I believe nothing but the truth is truly good for people. What do *you* believe?"

"I don't believe I am immortal," he answered, "because I see no reason to believe it."

Florence said: "We must be immortal, because nothing dies, but is passed on. And there is something in us—I mean that which loves and knows sympathy—which we do not pass on. So I think it must be immortal."

Marian said: "I am, so I don't see how I could not be."

I answered them: "Marian's and Florence's ideas seem to me very good. One cannot prove immortality. I have good reasons to believe it. But my best reason is not a reason at all; and if you don't understand it, I cannot explain it to you. If I am, I must be forever. 'I am' means immortality. That is what Marian said, and what I believe. If I believe in the whole Self of the universe, and that Self is in me, and I am in it, then how can I die unless that Self dies? And if I believe in progress, which is toward complete understanding and wholeness of the Self, how can that progress be without me who am a part of it? Do you know who Robert Ingersoll was? Well, he, who

passed for such a scoffer—though in reality he expressed only his own realization of his ignorance and his contempt for dogmatic faiths—once said: 'I am a part of the world. Without me the world would be incomplete. In this there is hope.' Hope, he meant, of eternal life with the world."

The children were much impressed.

Marian said: "How can one face the horrible thought of extinction? It is unimaginable. What answer would you give," she asked, "to those people who claim that we are immortal only in our children, in the race? I never know what to answer them, and yet I feel sure they are not right."

"I think there are two good answers," I said. "First, it is extremely unlikely that the race is immortal. Even if we thought our immortality unlikely, it is far more likely, and much less of an act of faith, to believe in it than to believe in race-immortality. We know that every planet dies and parches. We know that every race, every physical manifestation comes to an end, but we know that the spirit of life lives forever, and forever grows. I have heard people say that when this planet dries and freezes, men will have advanced so far in science that they will find their way in airships to another planet. But to me it seems far more unlikely than that the spirit of life, the self within us, should go on forever. The second answer seems to me to be Florence's answer, that we are not immortal in the race, that although

we give our children much, we give to no one our power of love, of understanding, of sympathy."

Henry asked: "Don't we give it through example and teaching?"

"We give much," I said. "We can teach and train, but we give no one that understanding self, the power for love and sympathy, which is in us, and cannot be made."

Henry did not see how one could find satisfaction in living for the race, since forever and ever each successive generation would be mortal and would disappear.

I said I did not believe that in a world which to us was all intellect, the intellect could die. Then I read aloud the following passage from "John Percyfield," by C. Hanford Henderson:

"It is an old mistake, that of calling desires beliefs. But I think I have allowed for this. I have said, if death end all, if that be the truth of it, then that is what I want to believe. For no man in his right senses wishes to be either self-deceived, or other-deceived. I have doubted immortality, even disbelieved it, but now I believe it on as strong warrant as I have for any of my scientific beliefs. In one sense, immortality cannot be experienced; it is not a fact of experience in the same immediate way that certain minor scientific facts are. But neither can the paleozoic age be experienced, nor space, nor time, nor cause and effect. They are inductions from experience. And so to me is immortality. It is an induc-

tion from experience. In a world where every reality is essentially spiritual, or intellectual, whichever term you prefer, where even the study of nature, as soon as it passes from mere observation into orderly science, becomes a mental rather than a physical fact, I can only imagine the disappearance of spirit by picturing the annihilation of the universe itself. Without the mental part that we give to all of our so-called facts, they would cease to exist. It is possible that the universe does shrivel up in this way and disappear, but it is less probable, I think, than any one of the great possibilities which science rejects, and feels warranted in accepting their opposite as fact."

I said that to me as to him it seemed as if, were there not immortality for the self, the world itself might shrivel up and disappear. A world without immortality would be a mad world, without reason; and, as everything else seems reasonable to me, I believe the world to be reasonable. I spoke, too, of the danger of believing things simply because we liked them. I told them how I had disbelieved in immortality at one time, because I suddenly found I had only believed what pleased me.

Virginia said: "I believe things because I like them. But may not that liking, that feeling, in itself be a sign of truth?"

"No," I answered; "liking is no proof or sign."

Marian said: "But it is only because we care, because we wish to believe, that we begin to think of these things."

"Yes," I replied, "we must care. But then we must bravely face the truth."

Marian told us she had never been taught anything on this subject, but that gradually her belief had grown, and that her talks with Ruth had helped her from her ideas.

I said many people believed in "personal" immortality; that is, immortality with memory, and the meeting of those we love. I do not pretend to know, or to have a definite opinion. But I think the results of life are eternal, even if not in precise memories. I asked the children for opinions. None of them seemed to believe, or care to believe, in distinct personal immortality.

Ruth said: "We would surely meet those we had loved, in that complete whole self, even though it were not as persons."

I was surprised and glad to hear her say it. I had said to the children that they probably believed, and might easily believe, much beyond what I told them, but this was all which I believed; I would tell them no theories or surmises of mine, of which I could not feel certain. They were urgent in asking me please to tell them some theories, but I refused.

Virginia said she believed in transmigration. I think it possible, as I told her; it is in every way consistent with progress and all things in life, but I have no reason for feeling sure of it. She said: "It must be true, for if there is just so much spirit in the world, forever and ever, and if it must express itself through

matter, how can there be anything but transmigration? Some time we may all live again on some other planet, in some other shape." I said it might be so.

The children asked me whether I believed animals were immortal. I answered that as much life and self as is in them must be immortal. I observed that this idea of animal-immortality was consistent with Virginia's belief in transmigration, that so each least creature might rise through successive stages toward its complete self.

Then I said to the children that, of course, if we believed we had been nothing before we were born, we could easily believe in extinction. But I, for one, believed, yes, knew, that I had been forever, that I was not "made" in these few years.

"Yes," said Marian, "I could not have grown to be what I am, just since I was born."

Henry said: "We are not concerned with the past, but with the future."

Virginia, and the others, brought up instances of seeming to remember things from a former life, of feeling as if they had done some particular thing before, in the dim past.

Alfred had not spoken at all during this time. He now said he very much wished he could believe in immortality, but could not see any reason for doing so. I said we should have to spend the next meeting in convincing Alfred. I went on: "If we believe in the vast Self of life, and if we are a part of that awakening Self, how can we die?"

Then I read aloud Emily Brontë's "Last Lines."

I was glad to leave the subject open in this fashion, to give them a week for thought, and I said little more.

SIXTH MEETING

I BEGAN by reading the children's papers. Virginia wrote the following:

"Some people have the idea that to pray means to fall upon one's knees, fold one's hands, lift one's eyes to heaven, and mutter some words one doesn't understand, sometimes in a foreign tongue. I don't agree with them. Unconscious prayer is the only true prayer; at least, so I believe. In a great crisis a man does not go on his knees, or, if he does, he is not praying what he is saying, which is a mere parrot-cry. His prayer is what he is thinking, and what is in his heart.

"Many people say a prayer every night. In most cases this is not a true prayer, but still it brings peace and calmness, and it is lovely to be in a calm state before going to sleep. I think the reason for this is that the person who prays before going to sleep thinks himself so virtuous that he is at peace with the whole world. Then again, the person who goes to church every time he commits a sin, and prays for forgiveness, becomes careless of the wrong he does. For can he not pray and be forgiven without the least trouble?"

We had a good laugh over Virginia's idea of

prayer, which seemed to be chiefly her idea of other people's prayer.

Then I read Henry's paper:

"Every man must decide for himself whether or not he shall pray, for no one else can tell him, since it is a matter of feeling. If a man is relieved by prayer, then let him pray; but if he only prays from habit, he is doing wrong.

"We must not expect that our prayers will be answered by that superior power which we call God, for this will only happen when we make up our minds to gain our end, and put our heart and spirit in the work. There is a saying, 'God helps those who help themselves.'

"Some people like to put their prayers in words, while others like to think them and feel them. Still others like to put out of their minds for a time all earthly troubles, and just think of and feel that kindness and sympathy for their fellow man; and to think of the great spiritual questions which should have such great influence on the lives of everybody, and in this way let that spirit within them get complete control of them, and that is their way of praying.

"No one can say which way is the right way, but if you do it in that way which does you the most good, for you it will be the right way."

Henry said he thought kneeling, and the attitude of prayer, were a "pretty" custom. They were the attitude of supplication. I questioned whether the best "prayer" was a supplication, said I did not like

the word "prayer" for that reason. Virginia said she thought we often "felt" a supplication, even if we did not pray nor expect an answer.

Marian had tried to get the "prayer-feeling" each night last week, but had not succeeded. She could not get calm, but thought of everything under the sun, and then fell asleep.

Virginia said: "You can't make your mind a blank."

I answered: "Making your mind a blank is not prayer."

Henry thought it good to consider our spiritual problems just before going to sleep, and so get into the right state of mind. Ruth agreed.

Now I read Marian's paper:

"At a meeting of the Seekers on November 8th, we discussed the subject of Prayer. Prayer is really a feeling. When we feel truly in harmony with our inner and our bigger self, the feeling we have is prayer. Prayer can be made a source of strength. If we find some way to get into the prayer-feeling every day or at night, it will be a great help to us. As we reached a conclusion on this subject very soon, we began a discussion on Immortality, which we expect to finish next week."

Now we spoke of immortality. Although the six of us believed in it, by trying to convince Alfred we might gain much.

I asked why, or whether, it was important to have an opinion concerning immortality.

Marian said it was important for us to know, because we were interested, because we cared so much. I answered, that was one reason, and then there was another. Ruth said the other reason was that we acted according to our ideas of death, that it influenced our morality.

"Yes," I answered, "we live according to our expectations. Think of how the false or true ideas of a future life influenced morality in ages past, of the morals, good and bad, which sprang from the idea of heaven and hell! Alfred, do you think it is important to know?"

"Yes," said he, "it is important; but I can't come to any conclusion. I am not convinced."

Some people feel sure one cannot know anything about immortality, and that therefore it is not worth thinking of it at all.

Henry said: "Because one does not know a thing now is no reason why one should not try to find out. And I believe we shall know, some time. If people had felt so about other equally difficult things, we would never have got on."

I said: "What is knowledge? We cannot *know* immortality as an experience, through our senses; but I believe we can *know* through our reason, just as so much other scientific knowledge is a matter of reason, of analogy, of deduction. It can't be proved, as one might prove that two and two are four. But then I once read in a book that nothing could be proved, except the things not worth proving.

"If we saw a red rose, and we all called it a red rose, there would be no doubt of its redness. But if we differed, and some called it red, some pink, some yellow, we should soon be in grave doubt. Our eyes might be wrong. There have been so many opinions regarding immortality, because people had different 'eyes,' that now we are full of doubts."

We spoke of the time when the earth was thought flat because it looked flat.

Alfred said: "Immortality of what, do you mean?"

"Immortality of everything," I answered. "We might, of course, believe that the universe will die, will be extinct. But it is an unthinkable thought. We all believe in something eternal. We know that force does not die, but is changed and transmitted; we know that no substance is destroyed; we know that every action, every circumstance has endless consequences and endless antecedents. They—and I—are forever a part of the universe. How could we be destroyed? Why should we think that everything is immortal, excepting self, which seems the motive force?"

Alfred said: "I don't believe it is destroyed; but it goes out of me, and that is the end of me."

The others asked how Alfred could have agreed with us all so far, and not agree now, since it seemed to them that what we had said before, the idea of progress, implied immortality. How could he believe in the Self as God, the vast Self which comes

to complete understanding, and yet believe that he, who was a part of it, that in him, and he in that, could be utterly destroyed?

He said he believed new self was always coming into the universe, and old self going out.

"Where would it come from, where would it go?" asked Virginia.

I said: "There is nothing but the universe. Everything is in it."

He answered that he believed in progress, progress toward unity and understanding, but it passed from one person to another; it would not be himself.

"How could the whole of Self be complete unless you were there?" I asked.

"I can't believe it," he said. "I don't see how it could be. It would not be myself."

"No, not you, in any definite sense, but self, and yourself in that. But it does not matter whether you disagree, if you can really go onward with us, and believe with us, without believing you are immortal. For all that matters is how we live now. It is not necessary to know the future, unless you need it for the present. When I say 'immortal' I mean we are immortal, now, because the universe is here."

Ruth thought that life would be meaningless if we were not immortal; that all progress, all goodness would have no sense. She said: "One might live to do good, just to be kind to others, who were also mortal. But if that were the end, there would be no meaning in it."

Henry agreed with her, and most of the others expressed similar ideas. I said this did not prove we were immortal. But I, too, felt a limited life to be meaningless. Still, I wanted to know the truth.

Alfred saw he could not consistently believe in race immortality, but he wanted to.

Virginia said: "You know the sun will burn down some time. Every fire burns itself out. Then the world will get cold and dark. And then what becomes of the human race?"

"But," I said, "the energy that was the sun will be in the universe, and will light other suns."

"Energy never dies," said Virginia. "If I put out my arm like this," and she stretched forth her hand, "the energy that goes out from me never dies. It bounds and rebounds, and in some way goes on forever."

"As it has been forever until now," I said.

"No, I think it dies out," said Alfred. "If you bounce a ball, it bounds and rebounds and then stops."

I explained to him how energy is not destroyed, but transmitted; how nothing is ever destroyed, but all things are changed.

He believed the physical part changed and was not destroyed. Still, it was not life any more.

He said: "It is not the same thing. I am myself now, but I am not the same person I was as a little child. I am all changed."

"Yes," I answered him, "your body is different material, your brain and your thoughts are not the same,

your shape is changed, but you are still self, and you were self then."

"But when I die, where will I be?"

"I don't know," I said. "But I know that somehow you must be."

Virginia and Alfred—in fact, all the children—had a long discussion. Alfred said, in speaking of a horse which had been buried in the woods, and over which ferns had grown, "but the ferns were not the horse"—a sensible remark. He said: "When you move your hand, the energy that goes onward is not the hand. And so, when I die, the self that goes out of me may be a force, but it will go out of me, it will not be I."

"But you yourself," I said, "are the life, the force, the self, which goes forth, which moves all things."

Here the children, being left to themselves, went up into thin air. They argued the possibility of nothingness. Virginia told how when she was a little child she used to imagine what would happen if there were no earth. They each described how they couldn't imagine nothing, and what happened when they tried. Ruth told how one couldn't imagine perfect unity and understanding, either. I stopped them, and said it made not the least difference in any fact whether they could or couldn't imagine it. Virginia, the little artist and mystic, said she thought in childhood one touched the truth unconsciously. The others all denied this. I said it was a pleasant and comfortable thought.

Now I said there was one other interesting thing I wanted to speak of, and that was memory. Most people believe we remember nothing from before birth. This is not true. Our whole body, our very being, is a memory. Florence said: "It is a race memory. Often we find it easy to do a thing we never did before, because our ancestors did it."

"Yes," I answered, "instinct is a memory. The fact that we are here at all, our minds, our thinking, as well as our bodies, are a memory. We ourselves, our present bodies, are a consequence of the lives before us, a memory from the endless past."

"We are what they lived," said Ruth, "as our bodies shall be what we live, not what we think on the surface, but what we live."

"Yes," I answered, "but after a while we do live our thoughts."

Henry said life was a repetition with progress. "But in the one-celled animal," he asked, "was life an expression of mind?"

"I don't know," I said; "but it seems to me self or will must be at the bottom of all motion. I read a theory lately, in an 'evolution' book, that was very interesting. It is this: That consciousness or desire is the source of all development, and that lower creatures are conscious of acts which to us are automatic. The lowest creature, which is a mere bag or stomach, would then be conscious of itself, whereas in us the consciousness of primal organs is swamped and lost in our more intense nervous consciousness. Thus,

from the first, consciousness and will might be the source of progress, as they are now."*

They all thought it a plausible and interesting theory. Marian said:

"It seems likely. For do not babies have difficulty in walking, and are conscious of every step, whereas we do it almost automatically?"

"Yes," I said; "it might be the same with the race."

I insisted that one could know the truth in certain directions, if one were willing to admit absolute ignorance in others. I felt sure I was immortal, but I had not the least idea how. I would not build up a heaven, hell or universe of the dead, because all these conjectures were likely to be false. I said one could know much and learn more only by admitting one's limitations.

Of course one could not know, I said, but I myself did not believe in personal immortality with definite memory. It might be so, or it might not.

"I think it is not so," said Marian, "for we remember nothing definite from before birth."

"But," I said, "I feel sure that memory, the essence of memory, will go on; just as our bodies and selves are a memory, so whatever we are in this life will have its consequences, and we will be forever according to what we are now. All progress is a memory—and a prophecy."

I spoke, too, of the endless stream of every least action, how the least word, once spoken, is a spring

*Cope's theory, in "Darwinism To-day," Kellog, p. 287.

of eternal consequence, how each moment is tremendously important. I reminded Marian how she had once said school was so short, it did not much matter what one did; and I had answered her, all life was short.

"Some people think actions under certain conditions —in foreign lands, for instance—do not count."

Virginia said she lived to enjoy herself, no matter what death might be, but her enjoyment included making others happy. I said, that was the only good way to live, to enjoy oneself, and have a very big idea of what enjoyment meant.

In talking we stumbled across difficult, confusing words, "God," "truth," "eternity." Ruth said: "We ought to invent a new language, a code of symbols, for everything in the old language has so many acquired meanings, is so used up."

"We have made almost a code of our own," said Marian.

Alfred had said nothing to let me know whether or not he had been convinced of immortality. It will be interesting to hear what he has thought during the week.

We had now finished the first and fundamental part of what we meant to do; we would now test everything by that standard.

"It is strange," said Marian, "how everything we have said has sprung from just one thing."

"What is that?" I asked.

"Our idea of God," I answered.

I said that, according to my prediction, we scarcely found it necessary to use the word God.

Marian answered: "It is because the word has so many meanings, is so easily misunderstood. But we know what we mean without saying it. My Sunday-school teacher said God took a personal interest in each one. I don't believe that," she went on, "except as we are in ourselves, and take an interest in ourselves. That idea of hers puts God, as it were, outside and apart."

I questioned Ruth concerning Christian Science. She said our idea corresponded altogether with hers; it was the application which would probably differ, and we had not yet spoken of that. "We will do so now," I answered. I asked the others if they would not like to have Ruth speak, in a meeting later on, of Christian Science. They all said that they would like it.

Next we will consider art, creative genius, in relation to our idea. I was glad the children agreed with me in preferring this to moral disputations. I said I thought the longer we waited to speak of moral questions, the larger view we would take of them. I wanted to avoid pettiness.

Our subject for next week grew naturally out of this week's talk. I said: "As a drop of water can be a sphere as perfect as the suns and planets, so each smallest thing, if it be perfect in itself, typifies the universe. You must realize that in an infinite universe there is really no such thing as size."

"There is only comparative size," said Virginia.

"Yes," I answered; "and it is with this idea in mind that I wish to consider beauty, and the definite separate creation. I shall want to know next week what each of you means by beauty, or thinks beautiful."

Marian—thinking of the personal side immediately—said: "I think it's because most people are homely, that we think some beautiful."

We were amused at that. I said I did not mean personal beauty in particular. Then they asked, did I mean artistic beauty? I meant beauty in anything. I would want to know what made certain things seem beautiful to us.

Virginia said: "I think there is nothing so beautiful as taking a deep, deep breath. That brings beautiful thoughts into my head, and makes everything right."

This remark did not seem pertinent to any of us. Virginia insisted, too, that she thought a man was an artist, even if he could not express himself; that to have artistic thoughts made one an artist. I answered, it might be so; but a word itself was not good art unless it was a good expression, no matter what the artist might be. Virginia explained: "I mean an artist is more interesting than his work, sometimes."

Florence said: "A beautiful thing—in art—is a complete thing, complete and perfect in itself."

"I don't think so," answered Virginia. "If you were to sketch a tree—without finishing it at all—

and that sketch were your whole idea of the tree as you saw it, then it would be no sketch, but a finished picture. A thing is a sketch until you have altogether expressed your idea. But then, no matter how sketchy it may look, it is finished."

I had to interpret Florence to Virginia. I said: "Florence did not mean completeness in the sense of exactness. She meant that the tree, no matter how indicated, must seem to us so complete, in a world of its own, as to leave nothing lacking or intruding; that everything in the picture is there in relation to the tree, and the whole makes a perfect little world. If there were suggestions of other things which had nothing to do with the tree, such as there always are in life, it would not be a perfect picture. You said it must be a complete expression of the artist's thought. That is just the completeness Florence means. It must be a complete, self-sufficient harmonious vision of a tree. And harmony means wholeness, doesn't it?"

"For instance," said Florence, "even the smallest and most trivial poem would be beautiful if it were perfect in itself—and complete. Take Leigh Hunt's 'Jenny Kissed Me,' such a little thing, and yet beautiful, telling the delights of a kiss. And then take 'Faust,' which is much larger and deeper; and yet each is perfect in its way, though 'Faust' expresses so much more."

"Have you read 'Faust'?" I answered her.

"No," she said, "but I know all about it." *I* knew

that she had got her ideas ready-made from "brother Arthur," and I was amused. But I did not wish to be hurried into the midst of my subject without beginning at the beginning, so I cut the discussion as short as might be.

Marian said: "I don't understand what they mean."

I told her she would understand when we had talked it over, that I only wanted her, before next week, to settle her own ideas as to what she thought beautiful.

Florence repeated: "Beauty is completeness."

"I think," said Marian, "I begin to see what Florence means by that. Like the drop of water."

I like to suggest the subject for the following week at the close of each meeting, and, if possible, to speak enough of it to give them a starting-place for their thoughts.

SEVENTH MEETING

RUTH brought with her a "Christian Science" prayer. I said I would read it aloud at the meeting on Christian Science. One line in the prayer was, "purified from the flesh." Ruth guessed, before I said anything, that I objected to this line. She believes the body is "something to be overcome." All the others and myself disagreed with her.

I said: "I, who believe in endless progress, believe the means themselves to be good and wonderful. Unless this moment were good, nothing it led to could be wholly good."

Ruth said: "The body is something unreal, unessential, which we do not keep."

I answered: "We keep nothing but what we always possessed, the power of growth." Ruth says we get certain new truths, and then keep them. She tries to think that my idea and Christian Science agree in every way, except that we use different language. But she has doubts and qualms. Then we spoke of "New Thought." I said I thought most of what is called so was unanswerably true, only there seemed to be an enmity between "New Thought" and good English. Marian agreed with me. She said she could have no respect for a man who used poor

English. I would not say that, for I had received too much information from men who did not know how to give it. But, I said, I had often missed information rather than rewrite a book for myself mentally, before I could read it. Marian's father had read aloud to her, from a "New Thought" book, this sentence: "The seen is unreal, and the unseen is real."

"I don't believe that," she said. "Do you?"

"No," I answered; "I believe everything is real, the seen and the unseen. There is nothing but reality."

I also said my chief objection to all these cults was that they insisted too often on physical health as the aim of life. Virginia said: "But just think, if we had not to be concerned about our bodies any more, if we were perfectly well, how much we could do!"

"Yes," I answered, "that is true; but still it is not an end, but only a means."

This was all before the meeting. Alfred had come very early, as usual, and told me he "thought" he believed as I did concerning immortality.

I opened the meeting by reading Marian's paper:

"On Sunday, November 15th, the Seekers held a regular meeting. Our discussion was on Immortality. Most of us agreed that our self, our real or inner self, is immortal. In the first place, if this self in us and in every one should die there would be nothing left, because that is the real, the life-giving power. Moreover, if we were not immortal, what

would be the use of life? Some people argue that we leave part of ourselves and the impressions of our characters to other generations, and so on. However, science has (almost) proved that the race is not immortal, and at least, it is harder to believe that it is, than to believe in the immortality of the real self. Personally, I feel that my real self is immortal, and that I will go on being. We do not attempt to picture any future state. This discussion is the only one in which we did not all agree."

Next I read Henry's paper:

"To-day we continued our talk on Immortality. Immortality is entirely a matter of faith, but the different ideas concerning it have influenced the fates of nations.

"The mind realizes so much that it does not accomplish, that it seems as though there must be a continuance of spiritual action after what we call death. If the spirit did not continue to exist, what would be the purpose of our life? Some say our purpose is to pave the walk of life for our descendants. Indeed, we do want those who come after us to find life pleasant and worth while living, but that alone would not be a sufficient purpose, for why need there be descendants? Why was there anybody in the beginning? And besides this, we have more reason to believe in the mortality of the race than for any of our beliefs in regard to the soul. Science teaches us that certain of the planets, which were once habitable, are now no longer so. This may some day hap-

pen to our planet, and then the race for which we have worked will cease to be. Although we do live for the race, we live more for the spirit. We have already said that we are part of one great union. If this is true there must be immortality, for when part of the spirit ceased to be, there would no longer be a great, perfect union."

I said to Henry: "Your papers never begin as if they were going to be right, but they end especially well. You always keep the best for the last."

Now we went on to our subject of beauty. What, I asked, was the one truly beautiful perfect thing, the thought of which gives us more delight than any other?

They said—bit by bit—that it was complete understanding, unity, sympathy.

I said I believed every beautiful thing was one which symbolized this completeness, something that in itself seemed complete and perfect and fulfilled. It took some time to explain this. Florence, of course, already understood it. Virginia and Marian caught at it as a new and elusive and valuable idea. All except Henry saw what I meant. Marian had said, even before I expressed this idea, that beauty was symmetry.

Henry said: "I don't see what you mean, or why you need question it. A beautiful thing is one that gives us a thrill of delight."

"Yes," I answered, "certainly. That is like saying a thing is red because it has a red color. What

I want to know is why things delight us with their beauty, so that we may make a standard from these, whereby to judge all things."

I stopped them when they began to speak of special works of art, because, I insisted, we would first speak of beauty in all things in the world.

Virginia said: "When I am in a field among animals, playing with them all, that to me seems beautiful. I do feel sympathy with them, but it isn't completeness."

"No," I answered, "and it isn't beautiful, though it is delightful in another way. Beauty is something apart from us, which we see and hear, and which wakes in us a sense of completeness, of harmony within itself, as if *there* were the whole world, nothing lacking, nor yet too much. A landscape, for instance."

"It is sometimes not beautiful at all," said Henry.

"No," I answered, "surely not. A landscape, no matter how beautiful and wonderful, would be spoiled by a big sign on the nearest tree, advertising 'Babbitt's Soap.' "

"Or a sign 'To Let,' " said Henry.

"Yes," I answered, "though that might not be as bad, yet that, too, would be inharmonious, and suggest all sorts of irrelevant things."

"But," said Henry, "a burnt wood is harmonious, I suppose, and yet it would be ugly."

"Not always," said I, "not if it were blended into the landscape, and mellowed."

"No," Henry answered, "perhaps not, if the colors were beautiful."

"But if it were ugly," I said, "it would be inharmonious. A newly burnt forest suggests death and desolation in the midst of life and summer—an incongruity. It suggests destruction where the thought is most unwelcome and horrible."

"Then," said Marian, "it is not the thing itself, but the feeling which it gives us, that is beautiful."

"Yes," I said, "it gives us the thrill of that complete joy. We seem to see something which is what cannot be; complete harmony. The sight of the sea makes Virginia feel so. And you, the out-of-doors."

Virginia said: "I have sometimes thought beauty is light, because the sun is most beautiful—and, at night, the moon."

"But," said I, "if there were no shadows and no darkness, sun and moon would not be beautiful."

"Then contrast?" she asked.

I said: "There must be contrast in all beautiful things, because without contrast we could not have completeness."

"Yes," she said, "in pictures it is so."

"A small thing," I went on, "might symbolize completeness, as well as a large one. A dog, in his way, a beautiful Scotch collie, for instance, might be as beautiful as a man."

"Yes, indeed," said Ruth.

We criticized, and found lacking, according to our standard, the beauty of prize bulldogs; the teeth were

too suggestive of strife and biting, the spots unsymmetrical, and so on. They spoke of many instances of beauty in things, especially the beauty of little children, and fitted them to this new standard.

Marian said: "A drop of water is so symmetrical and harmonious, so beautiful in the sunshine; and yet, on a dark day, on the sidewalk, it is not beautiful."

I explained even that. I showed her how a drop on the sidewalk was not a drop, but a daub, how it suggested all sorts of ugly and incongruous things. "But," I said, "if we take the trouble to look at a drop hanging from anything, say from a leaf, we shall always find it beautiful."

She agreed to that. Then she said: "Don't you think we sometimes do think of our own life as a beautiful thing?"

"Yes," I answered. "There are moments when our own life suddenly seems complete, when we feel an artist's delight in it, and for a while we, and the whole world with us, seem to have reached what we longed for."

Florence asked: "Don't you think it is usually when we are having a very good, jolly time?"

Marian answered quickly: "No, not at all."

I understood what Marian meant, and did not attempt, naturally, to explain it to the others.

Now we all agreed, every one of us, that completeness and harmony were beauty. But the children had started time and again to bring up in-

stances in art which to them seemed not to fit, and which they thoroughly misunderstood.

"You see," I said, "that the beautiful thing is the same as that which seems to us most true and good."

Marian said again that one idea seemed to cover everything, and that we came to conclusions quickly.

"Now I will tell you," I said, "what I mean by art and the artist. In speaking of art here to-day I mean not only painting—as one of you thought—but everything which expresses beauty; poetry, the novel and drama, sculpture, music, acting. You see the difference between science and art?"

"Science gives us knowledge," said Marian.

"Yes," I answered, "or, rather, science gives us facts, truths, but never at all the complete truth. It gives us parts as parts, never the whole. Philosophy, on the other hand, does what we are doing here. It reaches out for the complete whole, for understanding, for unity, but it knows well that it can never attain the end. It reaches out for the complete good, and is satisfied with nothing less than that unattainable whole. But art does another thing; it tells us a lie—the most wonderful lie in the world—truer than any truth. It says: Look, here is completeness, harmony, wholeness, in this one small shape. And we know it cannot be so, but still we feel it to be there. That lie gives us, as no truth can, the thing we long for, and know to be most true.

"Now, what do you mean by the word genius? What is genius?" I asked.

"Usually," said Virginia, "a genius is a crank. There is a girl in my art class who is the frousiest, queerest crank in the world, and every one calls her a genius."

"Geniuses are often queer," said Henry.

Ruth said, too, that many geniuses were anything but great and good in their private lives.

"Well," I answered, "I am surprised by your definition of a genius. But perhaps you will be more surprised, and sorry you said so much, when I tell you that I consider every one of you a genius."

"Oh, my," said Virginia, "how nice! I wish I were."

I said: "What we usually call genius is but a larger power of understanding, a sense of duty, of the relations of things. And we all have that, in some degree. So we all have genius. It is not a matter of quality but of quantity. We are all the same stuff, only some more and some less."

Henry said I might use the word in that sense, but he didn't think it was the true meaning. He said: "What definition is in the dictionary?" We had no dictionary at hand, so I tried to prove my definition true without a dictionary, and I succeeded.

I said: "There is no gulf between the genius and the stupid looker-on. Don't you see why there could not be?"

"I see," said Marian; "it is because the looker-on would have to have some genius, or else——" She could not finish.

"Just so, Marian," I went on; "or else he could not appreciate the artist's work. It is the genius in the onlooker that appreciates the genius in the artist. And in so far as you can appreciate the genius of Shakespeare, in so far you have the same sort of genius."

"Then," said she, "art makes us recognize ourselves."

"Yes," I answered, "our bigger selves."

"So one might speak," she said, "of a person developing his genius for music, or his genius for painting, and so on?"

"Yes," I answered; "and you see how easily and well one can use the word in that sense."

Ruth asked: "If the great genius is really one who understands better than the rest of us, and has a more harmonious vision, how is it that so many geniuses are incomplete and very imperfect in their personal lives?"

"I think it is," I said, "for the same reason that I gave you for disease in highly developed beings."

"I see," said Marian; "it is one part developed at the expense of another."

They wanted to know why so many artists were peculiar, erratic, "Bohemian"—Marian used that word. Virginia spoke again of the happy-go-lucky people down at the art league.

I said I thought one reason for this manner among artists was that, as they were always looking for the new, the beautiful—which is ever new—they had

no patience with so-called respectable people, who clung to old things because they were old, and so these artists often purposely went to the other extreme.

I said: "You must see that there is the tendency in all of us to make of life a work of art, to live a complete, beautiful life."

"I know some people," said Virginia, "whose lives do not seem to me in the least artistic."

"That may be," I answered, "but the tendency is there to make of life a complete expression."

"That isn't all I mean," said Marian. "I want to know what is meant by the artistic temperament."

"It is in great part," I said, "a fiction and a false generalization. Many experts have not the artistic temperament, and many not-artists have it. As for artists going astray more often than others, if that be true—which I doubt—there's a good reason for it. Artists are always very sensitive—naturally—and so, unless they are very strong-willed, too, they will be more easily swayed by outside events and their impressions."

"I don't believe every one has genius," Virginia said. "I know some people who are perfectly stupid, and don't understand anything."

"That is scarcely possible," I answered, "if they are human beings."

"Do you mean to say," asked Henry, "that you know any utterly selfish person?"

"Yes," she answered; "or, at least, people who are

not interested in anything worth while outside themselves; people who can walk through an art gallery and not look at the pictures; who love nothing beautiful."

"I may be one of those," said Ruth, "for I do not care for pictures."

"One's genius might not be developed in that particular direction," I said; "none of us are developed in all directions. But grant, at least, Virginia, that your most stupid people have undeveloped genius which might be awakened."

"All right," she said.

"Because if you don't," I answered, "I shall think your understanding of those people is very limited. Genius does not necessarily show itself in relation to art, to the sense of beauty. Genius is in the understanding a man must have to be a man. How could he have any relations with his fellows, any intercourse without some understanding?

"But there is one essential difference between the genius of the looker-on and the genius of the artist; it is that the artist creates, that he must have talent. No matter how much genius a man may have, if he does not or cannot express his genius, he is not an artist."

"Do you think," asked Marian, "that an artist knows himself to be a great genius?"

"I think," I answered her, "that no man ever does a great thing unless he first believes he can do it.

"You remember, I once said that to understand

life well one must be creative, one must do things, because life is forever creating. And so the genius who is an artist, who has talent, who creates, by that very creation understands better than other men. He who can draw a thing sees it better than he who cannot."

"Yes," said Virginia, "the fact that he can draw it proves that he sees it better."

"And in learning to draw it," I went on, "he came to see it better."

"The great artist," said Henry, "is one who expresses his idea perfectly."

"Then," Virginia said, "I wonder if I will ever get to be a great artist. For the thing I draw is never the thing that was in my mind."

"Now," said I, "you see the distinction between genius and talent. Genius is the power of understanding. Talent is the power of expression. A man may have very little to say, and yet say it wonderfully well. And another man may have much to say, and marvellous understanding of life, but not nearly so great power of expression. That is what Florence meant the other day, when she spoke of 'Jenny Kissed Me,' and of 'Faust.' But the man who expresses even the smallest thing well understands, at least, that thing. The power of expression itself implies understanding and a sense of unity and harmony. For no matter how well a man may be able to draw lines and objects, unless he understands composition—which is the knowledge of harmony and complete-

ness—he cannot paint a good picture. And no matter how well a man may write English, however perfect his style may be, unless he understands something of life, of symmetry and structure, he cannot write a good book."

Henry said: "Poe expressed himself very well. Was he a genius?"

"Now, stop," I answered. "Don't ask, 'Was he a genius?' Of course, he was that. We all have genius. The question is, how much?"

"It seems to me," said Henry, "that in some way Poe was as great as Shakespeare."

"Yes," I said, "in some ways; and that is a very good example. Poe's power of expression may have been as great in some ways as Shakespeare's. But just think how immeasurably greater was Shakespeare's genius, his understanding, and grasp of life!"

"Poe, for instance," said Henry, "was a great mathematician, and used his deductions in his stories."

The others told Henry this had nothing to do with his genius. They had a long talk on the relative genius—that is, understanding of life—of Poe and Hawthorne, and brought up many instances.

Marian said: "Was Milton a great genius?"

"What do you think?" I asked.

"I suppose he was," she said, "but I don't think he had a great understanding of human life."

"Have you read 'Paradise Lost'?" I asked her.

"Yes," she answered.

"Then you must have noticed his wonderful sym-

pathy with, and understanding of, the devil himself. He saw the tremendous contrasts of life, and understood them."

"I must read that," said Virginia, "if he wrote with understanding sympathy of the devil. Don't you think," she asked, "that those who write books for children generally understand life very well, and have true genius?"

"Perhaps," I said. "What do you think? How about those artists who write for children in the Sunday comic papers?"

Now I spoke of the artist in us all, who sees things ever as distinct wholes, who picks out, as he goes through life, complete visions of beauty to reproduce in his mind. These visions have to be distant, separate from himself. For life is so distracting and full of contradictory passions, so vast, and, as we know it in our limited lives, so incomplete, that we must get rid of it, we must separate ourselves, with our universal and unfinished relations, from the perfect and whole beauty which we wish to see in the artistic vision.

"You must have noticed," I said, "and you have often heard, that far-off things are most beautiful. It is because our life, interwoven with endless distracting circumstances, does not seem to touch those far-off things."

"Autumn leaves," said Marian, "far off look so beautiful, and near by are full of imperfections."

Virginia said: "And perfection of detail in a pic-

ture, as if the things were very near and real, does not make it better. It does not seem good. You know Millet's 'Sower,' at the Metropolitan Museum: when you go close, it is all streaks."

"This dimness of detail is for two reasons, in most great pictures," I said. "First, the artist often paints a picture with the intention of having it looked upon from a distance. Second, in the perfect whole, detail is merged. All must blend and harmonize."

"I never thought of that," said Virginia. "The too precise details in a picture attract a person's attention, and want to be looked at for their own sake, and so break in on the harmony and wholeness of the picture."

"Yes, just so," I answered. I spoke again of the sublime lie of art—the untruth which is most true. I said: "I once had an English teacher who used to tell us that in art one was not to give the truth, but the impression of truth. Truths often break in and destroy the impression of that whole truth.

"Now," I asked, "what is the one, the only object, of art in the world?"

We decided, all of us, that it was complete understanding and sympathy. Art is a symbol of that completeness for which our whole life longs. One of them—I think it was Henry—said its aim was progress. I said it was rather the picturing and prophecy of the end and aim of progress itself.

They had probably heard, I said, of "art for art's sake," the cant of those who believed mere form and

expression to be the whole of art, and left out of account the thing expressed. Virginia misunderstood me to say: "Art for its own sake," quite a different thing. So, thinking I would agree with her, she quoted, with disapproval, an article by Kenyon Cox, saying: "He who worked for gold sold himself, and he who worked for fame was utterly lost." I said I quite agreed with him; that unless one worked first of all for the sake of expression, and the joy of it, he was no artist.

"And, meanwhile, his wife and children might be starving," she answered.

"It is praiseworthy," I said, "to support one's wife and children, but it has nothing to do with art."

I said a man might well use his expression to earn himself bread; that it was necessary and natural, and had often even spurred a man on to work, but that it could not be his first aim if he were an artist. We spoke of Shakespeare, and of Goldsmith, and of their writing under the stress of poverty. I pointed out how, nevertheless, these men wrote of the things they loved and understood, and how the joy of work must have been their first aim.

I spoke of play, and of art being like play; of the old saying: "Work first, then play."

Henry said that was meant for little children.

I told them how scientists tried to explain play by calling it a preparation for work. Virginia liked that idea. I said that I thought work a preparation

for play, that play, interplay, the joy of creation, was life itself. The children easily understood play in this sense of the beloved work. Virginia said her work was all play. I reminded her that she might have to work hard, but she would do it gladly for the sake of that play. Marian said her school-work was almost always play. Ruth said: "I think play and work are the same thing, and that we human beings have made the distinction of words."

Art cannot rightly have any object but whole representation, but expression of the understanding of life. I said that whenever art tried to be moral—which was rather the business of philosophy—it lost thereby; that whenever one took sides for a thing, one took sides against something else, and had lost the completeness and symmetry of art.

Henry said he thought art ought to teach a lesson.

I answered: "Art ought to show us the whole of life, which is beautiful."

Virginia spoke of Dickens' novels, and said she thought those were best in which he wrote with an object, and against an abuse.

I answered her that they were best and also worst. They were best because he described in them the life which he knew and loved. But the parts of these very good novels which were directed against any people or institutions were always bad, inartistic, incongruous. As an example I quoted the dreary dissertations on Chancery in "Bleak House," and those who had read it immediately agreed with me.

Henry and Virginia questioned me several times concerning ugly pictures which were considered "good art." I told them that a subject not usually thought beautiful, an old, old woman, for instance, might be made beautiful by the artist's insight. I did not go into details, however, to-day. A great many ugly pictures, such as the work of Teniers, Steen, and others, seem to me very bad art. But now I spoke to them of Wiertz, the Belgian, who seems to me no artist at all, and concerning whom they had both questioned me. I took as an example of bad partisan art his picture of Napoleon in hell, with crowds of poor people making faces at him, and pelting him with brimstone. Such a subject in itself is impossible to art. What could be more unintelligent, petty, scattered and ugly!

Ruth said she did not see why an artist need understand human nature especially well unless he was one who treated of human nature; that a musician, for instance, need not do so. I began my answer, but gave way to a burst of enthusiasm from Henry.

How, said he, could a musician not understand human nature, he who knew how to rouse us to the depths with his notes, who could move us to tears? Surely he knew what he was doing, and the heart which he stirred.

Ruth said she did not see why Shakespeare showed greater understanding or completeness in his work than Emerson, for instance. Henry thought the same. I tried to show them that Emerson in his

essays was not an artist—or, at least, not nearly so much of an artist as a philosopher—that he strove to reach the good, the complete harmony of the universe, but that he did not give us the vision of a present, finished, concrete beauty. They both maintained that he did. Henry spoke of the essays on "Friendship" and "Manners."

"Have you read the essay on 'Manners'?" he asked.

"Yes, several times," I said.

"And doesn't it give you a picture?" he asked. Ruth added: "And the one on friendship. I seem to see that friend."

I owned I did not feel so. I said it gave me an inspiration, an ideal of conduct, not a picture. "Mind you," I said, "when I call Emerson more philosopher than artist, I am not saying philosophy is less than art."

"No, I understand that," said Ruth, "but I, for one, when I read Shakespeare, get not any especial feeling of the completeness or whole understanding of what I read. Emerson uplifts me much more, and gives me power to do things."

"That may be," I said. "You may rate either as high or as low as you please, but their genius is different."

I pointed out, too, how in Emerson's poetry, with its rare, beautiful couplets, and its many lapses, the genius and philosopher far outshone the man of artistic talent. We had not time to go into detail, or to quote largely, and I did not wish to speak much

of literary criticism and methods at this meeting, for I had planned to do so at the next, so I think Henry and Ruth went home unconvinced of the artistic superiority of Shakespeare over Emerson. One might almost as profitably argue who was a greater man, Beethoven or Napoleon!

Marian asked me whether George Eliot was an artist or a philosopher. I told her I thought she was both, but that I believed she would have been more of an artist had she been less a philosopher.

I asked Alfred why he had kept so silent. Did he agree with us?

"Yes," he said, "I do. It is very interesting. But I don't talk unless I disagree."

EIGHTH MEETING

HENRY came several days ago to tell me he would be unable to attend this meeting, as he was going to Washington. "I will think of the subject we were going to discuss," he said.

I opened the meeting with Marian's paper:

"At a meeting of the Seekers, held on November 22d, we discussed the relation which our previous discussions had to Art. We set up a standard for judging Art, and agreed that a good piece of Art is one that makes us feel that unity and completeness for which we are striving. Two things are necessary, a good thought and good workmanship. We also said that details in Art, particularly in painting, are bad because they distract us, and we don't see the picture as a whole. I was very glad to have a standard by which to judge Art."

I said to her that I hardly thought she could already have that standard.

"No," she said, "but I am going to get it."

Then I read Virginia's paper:

"Art as it is connected with our previous discussions:

"When an artist dies he leaves behind him all the beautiful ideas he has put on his canvas, or in his

books. To be a true artist one must possess an idea of the beautiful, and also be sympathetic with all his fellow beings. Not only humans, but flowers and beasts also. A person who possesses these qualities is a genius. But to be an artist one must also have talent. Either he must have a talent for writing, music or painting, or he cannot express the genius within himself.

"This sympathy, this love, is something we cannot explain. And so we call it the soul, because it is a puzzle, and we do not know what it is. Everybody possesses some of it, even the most heartless. It may be the love of a plant or dumb animal, but still it is love for a fellow creature. So all of us possess genius, though few of us are artists."

Next I read Alfred's paper:

"On Sunday, the 22d, we discussed the subject of art. We said that for a thing to be high art it must be pleasing to the eye or ear, and complete in itself; that is, the artist or composer must so construct his work that it will fully express some idea. In painting a picture an artist may choose to convey some gruesome idea, and do so perfectly, but that will not be high art, because it will be displeasing to the eye.

"It may also be applied to books; if the author tells something so well that it gives the reader a perfect picture of the thought, the writing may be considered a good one."

I said I could tell by Alfred's paper that he had not grasped just what was the object of art. The

children repeated that it symbolized the unity for which we longed. I asked, did they see why we took up this subject of art at all, what it had to do with religion? Marian had said, before the others came, that it was the expression of our religion. Virginia now used almost the same words, and Alfred, speaking after her, said it in such a way as to make me believe he understood.

I replied, this was true; art was the service of religion, the expression of that sense of oneness with the world which can speak only in creations, because life is an endless creation. Beauty, I said, seemed to me the perfect symbol of truth, of completeness and symmetry. I quoted the lines from Keats:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

"The subject of beauty always puzzles me," said Ruth, "because beautiful things so often are not good. Take the ocean, for instance. It is so beautiful; it gives us above all things the sense of immensity and harmony. And yet, think how cruel it is! Think of the shipwrecks and the suffering!"

"It is not the ocean's fault," said Virginia. "That is because we are adventurous and go out in ships."

"Yes," I answered, "and we are willing to take the chance and pay the price. But surely you do not think of the ocean as cruel, as either good or bad. Beauty is not in anything, but is in the vision of him

who beholds it. It is a momentary vision of the completeness of life."

"Beauty is always a thing of moments. Don't you think so?" asked Marian. "It depends upon you. At one time you may see a thing as beautiful, and at another time not."

"Surely," I said.

"Why is it," she asked, "that some people cannot appreciate beauty in one special form, either in music, or painting, or poetry?"

I said: "Our senses are channels through which we get the feeling of beauty. But no matter whence the feeling comes, it is that same joy. One man finds it in a picture, and another in a symphony, and another in the woods. Do you know those two lines by William Blake:

'Who knows but every bird that cleaves the air
Is an immense world of delight closed by our senses
five.'

"There may be other senses than ours which bring the same message. Helen Keller hears and sees it with her fingers in her world of darkness.

"Throughout the centuries," I went on, "in all beginnings and primitive times, art was the expression of religion. The first rude drawings were religious symbols; drama and the dance and music were religious; and all the oldest literature in the world, the Vedas, the Bible, and the old Scandinavian myths

were religious books: the Greek drama, and—can you think of others?"

They brought forth many instances; Marian mentioned the English miracle plays, and Virginia spoke of American Indian drawings, saying, however, that they were more often used for communication. I showed her how the first rude figures of animals, the totems, for instance, were also used as religious symbols.

I spoke, too, of the way in which art related us with great minds in ages past. "Ruskin mentions that," said Ruth and Marian.

"But it is a one-sided relation," I said, "for we cannot speak to them."

"I wish we could," answered Marian. "I so often wish I could ask them questions."

We said again how hard it was, when asked, to explain to outsiders the purpose of our club. Ruth said: "When I try to tell people, they answer: 'Oh, yes, I suppose you just talk nonsense, and have a good time.'"

Marian said people wondered that she was willing to stay in-doors on Sunday afternoons.

Virginia said: "I don't tell any one of it."

I suggested to them that if one got a perfect standard of beauty in art, it might be all one would need as a moral standard to make one's life beautiful in the same way.

Now we spoke of the novel. I said I had noticed that last week when I told them of completeness in

novels and plays, they seemed not to know just what I meant. Florence said she knew. "It means," she said, "that every word and every person and every incident must count. It must not be like life, where distracting and unimportant things are always happening."

"Just so," I answered. She had learned all that from brother Arthur.

I went over it more explicitly, citing instances, and then told them that we were all of us story-tellers, in the sense that we tried to make every story complete.

"In telling anything that has happened," I said, "we naturally leave out anything that has no effect on the story."

"And," added Florence, "we unconsciously make up little details that help to fill out the story."

"Now," said Marian, "I think I must forgive some one I know, who is always exaggerating."

"I know some one who does it all the time," said Florence.

"I don't think that makes it right, though," Ruth protested.

"No," I answered, "not right, but not wrong, either. When we realize the artist's tendency in us all to turn everything into a story, first, we will not judge people harshly for doing it, and, second, we will be careful when we are trying to tell the truth, not to allow ourselves to be cheated by the artist in us."

"I think," said Virginia, "people often miss-tell an event, and get it all twisted, because they really forget what was said."

"Of course," answered Ruth, "one is not to blame for forgetting."

I said: "I think that most of us, unconsciously, are story-tellers in both senses. Many of us are constantly telling ourselves stories about ourselves."

"Oh, yes," said Ruth, Marian and Florence. They gave me a hint of those wonderful romancings. Marian is always beautiful in her stories, "as in a real novel," she said. Florence said she was always as homely "as a mud fence," but I could see by her expression that none the less she was always triumphant. Virginia in her stories was accomplished and a great artist.

I forgot to be one of them for a moment. I said: "Until very lately I, too, used to tell myself stories about myself."

"I still do it," said Ruth.

On the subject of unimportant details and characters, we had a long talk. We spoke of Dickens' many characters and interwoven stories, and Virginia maintained that many had nothing to do with the plot, that they were soon forgotten, and there seemed to be no special reason for them. Marian saw, however, that at times six or seven plots might be woven into a single story. Instead of fitting the standard to Dickens, they fitted Dickens to the standard, and found, indeed, that "The Tale of Two

Cities," which had least characters and distracting stories, was most interesting, and well constructed. Virginia spoke of "Lorna Doone," and we all agreed with her that the long descriptions of how things were done—fishing, for instance—which the author gave because he was interested in the country, and which had nothing whatever to do with characters and story, made it monotonous and almost spoiled an otherwise delightful book.

Virginia said: "He even tells what pattern of suit he wore when he went fishing."

They found the same fault with Scott. Indeed, none of them likes Scott. The criticisms were amusing. His blonde heroines were always weak, his dark ones strong, but none of them interesting. Ivanhoe was a flabby nobody.

We spoke of Shakespeare, of the part his clowns played in the story.

Marian said: "I see in what sense his plays are complete, and I feel in him wonderful understanding of men and great sympathy. But he doesn't uplift me."

"Do you want to be uplifted into the lofty nothing?" I asked. "Is not humanity good enough for you?"

We spoke, too, of "Little Women," a much beloved book. We noticed how Louisa Alcott had changed the story to make it a story.

I pointed out to them what it was that made melodrama; namely, the intrusion of events coming from

without, not springing from the reaction of characters upon one another, or the intrinsic situation—such as robbers, marvellous rescues, or fortunes left by distant relatives. We had a long talk on this subject, and the children told many stories. But I doubt whether all finally quite understood the distinction, which is often hard to make. Is the coming and going of the ships in "The Merchant of Venice" melodramatic? I told them I should not call it so, since it was bound up with the whole story, almost like the persons. I said that the melodramatic was more like life than the purely dramatic, because in life, with its thousand relations, outside events made changes constantly. But the story was more true if it contained within itself its own complete world, like a miniature universe. Each work of art must represent the whole. "And this is why," I said, "in a really well-built play or novel, a trained person usually can foretell the outcome. Suppose that we knew everything in the universe, and all the relations of all things to each other, we should be able to foretell every event."

"Perhaps that is why novels grow tiresome," said Ruth, "for we get to know just how they will end."

I spoke of the author leaving out his one-sided moral verdict of his own story. After representing life, the artist should not judge; first, because his judgment is usually partial and incomplete, and breaks the unity; second, because he thereby shows lack of understanding and respect for his reader,

who might be trusted to draw his own conclusions. Hawthorne's stories are often spoiled by his moral comment at the end. At this point I spoke of missing Henry. I am certain he would not have agreed as readily as the others.

I said moral discussions were in place in books on moral subjects, not in artistic works. I mentioned especially the worth, ability and good influence of the writers of so-called "muckraking" articles in the magazines. Virginia waxed enthusiastic. She asked why should Dickens not write of abuses in his novels, when by so doing he actually brought about social reforms? I said that for the social reformer they were right, but not for the artist. I warned her not to confuse the two.

Here Marian spoke of Milton, and of his giving up his artistic work for years to serve his country in politics.

One could not wish he had done otherwise. A man's life comes before art, before any other expression. I said many of the "muckrakers" were men who might have been artists, but who felt called to work in this more direct way for the beauty of life, because they could not tolerate its ugliness. But they were not artists; they were something different.

"That may be so," answered Virginia, "but just the same I admire those brave, muckraking men more than artists."

"They are often more admirable," I said, "but that does not make them artists. If you admire a

soldier more than a poet, that does not make him a poet."

They spoke of the reformers working for the present, the artist for all time.

"But," said Virginia, "the result of the reformer's work will last for all time, too."

I spoke again of "for" and "against" in books, of how we felt that writer to be the greatest who understood and loved the villains as well as the heroes, and saw the strength and weakness of both alike. They all agreed to this, and quoted plenteous incidents; among others, the outcast in "Bob, Son of Battle," which they had all read and loved. "How I cried over him!" said Marian; and Ruth and Virginia had cried, too. Here Alfred came in with his enthusiasm.

"Didn't you cry over it?" asked Marian.

"No," he answered, "but I almost did."

"Oh, of course not," she said. "I forgot you are a boy."

"He wouldn't dare admit it, even if he did," I said.

Virginia said she usually loved the bad characters more than the good ones.

We saw how the false simplicity of villains and heroes—as represented in the poor novel—of all good and all bad, and their appropriate punishment and reward, was untrue to life and human nature. Surely, they said, all men had in them both good and bad. Scott, they insisted, made this mistake.

I spoke of the psychological and the dramatic methods in novels. I said to Marian:

"George Eliot, of whom you spoke the other day, is an example of the psychological method." I explained the two methods to them, the one going into minute details of motive and thought, the other suggesting to us the motive and thought through the action itself.

Marian does not like George Eliot. She greatly prefers Dickens and Thackeray.

I said I liked George Eliot, but still I preferred the dramatic method for several reasons. I thought that the passions, moods and changes of the soul were too complicated ever to be put down by any author so as to give the impression of truth.

Ruth agreed with me, and said: "Perhaps that is why I like plays better."

To put down how a man would act under any particular circumstances is much more convincing than to tell how he would feel; for life always expresses itself in creative action. I said: "A reader likes to be trusted and understood by the author. He would rather imagine the minute details of feeling as part of the whole swing of action, to fill out the picture for himself, to be recognized by the author as a fellow genius."

Ruth said novels tired her, because most novelists had only three or four characters which they used over and over again. I answered her that this was because they wrote out of their own lives, and their

characters were usually but different sides of themselves. I said many great painters used only few models. Virginia said she had remarked that many painters always painted faces that resembled themselves.

At this point, just as I was beginning to speak of wit and humor, Virginia's brother came into the room—in this case, for many reasons, an unavoidable interruption. I had so far always kept these two hours closed against all visitors. Although he sat down in the adjoining room, and was warned to listen and not to talk, his presence made them at once self-conscious and superficial. I asked them whether they knew any distinction between wit and humor.

Virginia answered: "I always think of a witty person as one who has good thoughts and expresses them cleverly, and of a humorous person as a boor and booby, like that one in the next room."

After the laugh had passed, I said: "Virginia, I can think of only one expression that will fit you just now, and that is slang. I think you are talking——"

"Through my hat?"

"Yes, exactly. This to me seems the difference between wit and humor: The witty man is he who says or writes clever, funny things, just to show how clever and keen he is. Conceits are witty, because wit is essentially conceited. It may be very interesting and entertaining, but it always makes you think

of the author rather than of his characters. It is always superficial, the trick of words, and it doesn't keep well through the ages. A pun, for instance, is always witty."

"Ough!" said Virginia, "not always!"

"Bernard Shaw," I said, "is a good example of wit. Humor is the understanding of the petty foibles, humors and lovable weaknesses of men. Remember that the word humor really means mood or state of the blood, that it is a word very like the word 'human.' Humor is always human. It is the large, genial way of looking at life of him who sees how little men are, and how great they are at the same time. It is a sense of absurd contradictions, of the unity of utterly unlike things, almost a parody of completeness. All humor, all wit, everything funny is an incongruous bringing together of things that do not seem to belong together."

"I suppose," Marian said, "that is why we laugh when we see some one fall in the street?"

"Yes," said Virginia, "for their heads and the sidewalk don't belong together."

"Now, seriously," asked Marian, "what makes me want to laugh when I see any one fall, especially a grown person? And I must laugh, especially if it is a fat person, no matter how hard I may try to be polite."

"That's because you expect a grown person and a fat person to be dignified, and to fall is very undignified. Imagine his high hat flying one way, his

gold-headed cane another, and his heels in the air. But if a little boy falls you don't laugh, because little boys are meant to fall."

"When my mother falls," Ruth said, "I can't keep from laughing, though I hate to see her fall."

"But everything funny grows stale very soon," said Marian.

"That is," I answered, "because when we get used to a combination it no longer seems incongruous."

"Well," asked Marian, "when you laugh at people because they are boors and funny, why is that?"

"That is," I said, "because you feel yourself to be so vastly superior."

"Is it?" she asked. "I suppose so."

"And next time you want to laugh at any one," I said mock-seriously, "just think of it first, that you are considering how superior you are."

She seemed greatly impressed and quite cast down by this remark.

I said: "Perhaps a good distinction to make between wit and humor is that wit laughs at people and humor laughs with them."

"Isn't satire wit?" asked Marian.

I thought a moment. "Yes, surely," I answered.

As I spoke again of the relation of beauty to our subject, Ruth said:

"What has all this about wit and humor to do with our subject?"

"Not much," I said, "except that it shows how the spirit of fun has a part in harmony; and that it

shows humor to be understanding and a human thing. But it is interesting for itself, isn't it?"

"Yes," she answered, "it is very interesting."

NINTH MEETING

RUTH was unable to come.

Not a single paper this week! When all but Florence and Marian had arrived without papers, I began to be disappointed; but when they came in, I said:

"I am going to give up the club."

You should have seen Marian's serious face. "Why?" she exclaimed.

"Because you haven't brought me any paper."

They all were too busy. But Florence had given Henry a good little talk on the meeting he had missed.

I asked them whether they had enjoyed these meetings on art as much as the first meetings. They all said yes, quite as much. I spoke again of the relation of our idea to art. It seemed to them all that art was the expression of the religious ideal. Virginia said: "It relates us with others and gives us sympathy." Henry said it was the action of religious feeling.

"Just as," he added, "it is said one knows a man by his actions."

"You know what I mean," said I; "it might be well expressed in a single phrase that would stay in your minds. Art is the symbol of completeness. It must be in itself a tiny world, a miniature universe.

Do you remember the delight you used to get when you were little, from a tiny doll's house, from a little thing that seemed real, that seemed a small, perfect world in itself? This joy you get from every work of art, the joy of a complete world."

"As in the novel," said Marian, "which is not like real life, with its incompleteness and distraction, but has within itself all the people and all the things necessary to itself."

I spoke again of the way in which I meant to discuss questions of conduct according to the rules of art. I said: "Life can be made beautiful and complete in the same way, and by learning these large laws we may avoid the pettiness of moral discussion. You, being a self, are the symbol of the whole Self.

"Now," I continued, "we will speak of poetry, of painting, of all the arts, and you will see that the laws of all are the same laws. What is the difference between prose and poetry?"

They mentioned various differences, such as subject-matter, form, manner of treatment.

"The chief difference between prose and poetry," I said, "is that poetry is written in poetry."

That seemed an evident difference.

"Metre, rhyme, musical measure of the words are qualities of poetry alone."

"But all poetry doesn't rhyme," said Virginia.

"No," I answered, "but all poetry has metre. Tell me another difference. In what way does poetry affect you differently from prose?"

"I know what you mean," said Florence. "You mean because it has metaphor and simile."

"That, too, but something else."

Marian answered, with some hesitation: "Poetry is emotional. It stirs your feelings more than prose."

"That is what I meant," I said; "it resembles music because it stirs you as much by the sound as by the sense. And just because it is more unreal and distant, it seems more real and close and complete in its grip. A thing must be far off to give us the sense of completeness and beauty. Music is to me the art of arts, because it expresses everything and defines nothing; because it is like life itself, rather than a description of life." Henry assented enthusiastically. I went on: "You spoke of metaphor and simile. We find it not only in all poetry, but in all prose. And what is it but the relationing of things to one another, the likeness and the bond between things unlike? And so keen is it, so natural, so close to us, that we use it every day, we are poets every moment in this respect, for we hardly ever speak without using metaphor. We say a sharp look, a piercing look, and so use metaphor. Do you see?"

Marian said: "When we say in school, for instance, that our teacher looked daggers, we are using metaphor."

"Yes," I answered, "and even slang is often good metaphor."

Alfred asked: "If you call a person a lemon, is that metaphorical?"

"Surely," I said; "but I think it would hardly do in poetry, because it is too unsympathetic."

"How about 23 skidoo?" asked Virginia. "Is that simile or metaphor?"

"That," said I, "is less metaphor than nonsense."

I said that in the modern play, which could not use the figurative language of poetry, the metaphor and simile were replaced by the symbol. I could not go into this, however, as none of them, except Florence, had read any modern plays. So I spoke of the fairy story, and how it often stood for something which was not itself. "Yes, like Brandt," said Florence. I did not dwell on this point, but went on to the subject of taking sides in poetry. I said that good poetry could not possibly take sides; that all didactic and party poetry was poor.

"I don't see that," answered Henry.

"No," said Florence, "he wouldn't let me convince him of it the other day."

Henry went on: "Take Whittier's war-time poems; they were written with a purpose and taking sides."

I said: "I don't consider Whittier a great poet. But that's not the point. His war-time poems are some of them good, perhaps, but the best are not partisan. A man may sing of freedom, and still not be partisan, as a man may sing of his native land, and need not therefore say mean things of his neighbor."

"It seems to me," said Henry, "that every work of art should have a purpose."

"Surely," I answered. "I never said it should not have a purpose. I said it should not take sides. Every work of art has the purpose of being beautiful, complete and true. So I suppose you might say that art is against ugliness. But ugliness is only a discord, a false vision which art overcomes with its beauty."

"I understand," said Henry. "You mean one might be for something without being against anything."

"Yes," I said, "one can be for completeness, for unity, for beauty, which includes all things. An artist pictures life; in telling a story he may see that some things lead to ruin and some to happiness, but he will not say he is for some and against others. He will stand far above them and see them all as they are, he will love them all, he will create a complete and individual world."

Virginia said: "I suppose you don't consider Burns a great poet."

"Yes, I do," I answered, "except in his didactic poems."

"Well," she said, " 'Scots wha' ha' wi' Wallace bled' is partisan."

"No," I answered, "it is martial, but it gives the foe his due. 'Break proud Edward's power.' That, it seems to me, is a tribute to Edward."

At first they dissented, but finally agreed with me

that most martial poems—all great ones—give the enemy his due. Marian spoke, in this relation, of Homer.

We considered high-falutin style and books that are all climax, without rhythm and reservations of strength, unlike life, which is all heartbeats and pulsations. Florence told of a book which had "six climaxes on every page." I spoke of the conventional phrases which mar style, because we feel them to be imitated.

"They are not original," said Henry.

"No," I answered; "and originality simply means truth in the writer."

"We feel," said Virginia, "that he didn't take the trouble to think for himself." Then she spoke of having been made, in school, to compare the like thoughts of different authors, and asked whether their being alike made them less original.

"No," I answered, "for two might see life in the same way, each for himself."

I went on to speak of music. "To me," I said, "it seems the most perfect of arts, because it is in itself harmony, the very word we associate with this idea of completeness. I don't know much of the laws of musical composition, but I know they are the laws of rhythm and harmony, the laws of all motion. Of course, it is figurative to speak of the music of the stars, and yet in a sense their motion is music, because it follows the laws of music. Music is the least definite of all arts, yet the most real and

near. It arouses our emotions as nothing else can do."

Most of them felt as I, that music was most gripping in its effects. Marian, however, did not, since she is not at all musical. I spoke of words and intellectual ideas in relation to music. Virginia said it made her feel glad to hear music, that she had to beat time. The others all enjoy music most when it has a literary annotation, either in opera, or in concerts with verbal explanations. At least they want to know the name of every melody. In this I said I agreed with them, because knowing the name immediately put me into the mood the composer wished, and saved me those first five minutes of uncertainty which every strange music awakens.

Henry said: "When I learn a new piece on the piano my teacher and I always talk it over. I have a piece called 'Spring in the Wood.' We say, 'Now we are in the border of the wood, now we hear the water rippling far off, now there are the ferns at the edge.' "

We spoke of painting.

I explained to them the point of interest, the point around which all other lines, colors and interests must centre, to which all are made subordinate. Virginia said: "But it need not be in the centre of the picture."

"No," I answered, "it had better not, since that would be monotonous and stiff. But wherever it is,

it makes itself a centre, and makes the picture a complete whole."

Virginia told of the plan of completing the central figure in a sketch, and leaving the rest unfinished—as a substitute, as I showed her, for the effectiveness of color. All eyes should be directed to the central figure.

I went into technical details of lines, angles and motion, with help from Virginia, to show how color might express mood and action, as well as did the figures, and so would make the whole harmonious. Virginia spoke of "curly clouds" in a picture of a burial, made at the art school, where the lines of the clouds were too gay, and spoiled the solemn effect of vertical lines.

From balance of line we went on to balance of light and shade and color. First I explained to them —what most of them knew—the complementary colors, and the cycle of color; that a picture containing blue and orange, or green and red, has within itself all the color there is. Think of the hideousness of a blue and yellow or red and blue picture! "It would have to be toned down with the third color," said Virginia.

I spoke of the literary intrusion into painting, of the necessity of a complete idea in the picture itself; the difference between illustration and art. A picture may have an illustrative name, but if it be complete, beautiful and satisfying without any name, it is not illustration.

What is excellent craftsmanship might be bad art.

Virginia and Marian spoke of some pictures in the Metropolitan Museum, which they had been told to admire, and could not; some of them pictures by Meissonnier, in which satins, silks and velvets were done to perfection. Henry spoke, too, of certain pictures of German monasteries which were painted for the purpose of picturing the life, with precise detail, and were not beautiful. I told them of the difference between art and craft. Art is a complete expression of life by one man. Craft is part of a big completeness, the work of one man which has a purpose in relation to the work of others; as a craftsman may make the cornice in a palace which an artist designed. The craftsman does a part, the artist plans the whole.

Marian said: "Sometimes some one says to me, 'that picture is perfectly beautiful,' and I can't see it so. Then again I may think a picture beautiful, and another person will not. Why is that?"

"Because," I said, "your taste, your standard, is different."

"Is it just taste?" she asked.

"Taste with a reason," I said, "even if you don't know the reason."

"I think," said Virginia, "that when an artist expresses himself well, every one must realize it."

"Not at all," I said. "One has to be trained to understand pictures, as one has to be trained to see."

I told them of Turner, whose pictures look beautiful to some, and to others are mere blotches of color.

"A picture is not what it represents," I said. "One must learn to see it. A proof of this is that babies, quite able to recognize objects, do not recognize pictures. And so some people are babies all their lives in relation to art.

"Now," I asked, "do any of you think photographs artistic?"

I believe Henry was going to say he did, but was overwhelmed by the others. Alfred said: "In a photograph all the unimportant things are there with the important."

Marian said that there, as in life, there was intrusion of inharmonious details.

The out-of-focus and blurred photograph sometimes is artistic, because of the lost details and the effect of distance; but, just therefore, it is untrue to fact.

Virginia said photographic art was bad art. She said: "My teacher gave a good example. If a fire-engine were tearing along the street, you would be so interested in that you would see nothing else. There might be crowds of people, but you would not notice them. But if a camera were to be snapped, they would all be in it and obscure the engine. You see only what is important, but the camera sees everything."

"That is a good illustration," I said. "And so you see we are story-tellers in vision as well as in

narrative. We see things complete and dramatic, whether they are so or not, just as we must tell a complete story. Do you realize how all the arts are related, how they all have the same laws? And these, I believe, are the laws of life.

"Did you ever think of it, that the artist sees only with his eyes, whereas you see with your eyes, fingers, ears, with all your senses? You see a table square, high, hard, smooth, but an artist sees it only in perspective, from a certain point of view. To get completeness you must limit yourself, because you cannot see the universe. The drop of water is most complete and perfect when it is a limited, spherical drop, not when it is scattered abroad in mist.

"The artist," I said, "is one who sees things beautiful, even when to others they do not seem so; and to see things beautiful is to see truth."

None of the children disputed this much-disputed fact—for to youth it is obvious—so I myself had to answer the objections. I said: "One might say that in life many things are ugly, and these things are true, therefore to see these things as beautiful is not to see them truly. But we believe that the whole universe, altogether, could we know it, would be harmonious and beautiful; therefore to see things as beautiful is to see them in relation to that truth, and as symbols of that truth."

Marian said: "We must believe that the whole universe is harmonious; anything else is unthinkable. We feel it in ourselves."

"You mean, because we have the laws of harmony in our own nature?"

"Yes. The whole must be harmonious."

We spoke of instances in which ugly things could be seen as beautiful. The empty lot across the street, with its boards, rubbish and shanties, is ugly; but at times, under certain conditions, and by shutting out a part with my hand, I see it as a beautiful wild landscape.

Marian said: "Near us are some poor, ugly houses, that I hate to see; but sometimes I see little children at the windows, who are so sweet and graceful they make the houses look beautiful."

"There are a great many pictures," said Virginia, "but I think there is not much art. Do you?"

"No," I said. "To be a painter does not make one an artist. Do you remember hearing people make the criticism that a picture was pretty, but not beautiful? Prettiness in art is a sad fault, one that perhaps you, too, have found. But do you know just what it is?"

Virginia said she had often seen pictures that were just pretty, without character.

I said: "When a painter makes pictures to please the taste of people whose taste he does not respect, when a would-be artist works to catch applause or money from the crowd by satisfying their bad taste, and does not even believe in the love of truth and beauty which sleeps in them all, then the thing he paints is usually pretty. He will paint a little child

with a kitten in her lap, because that is a pretty subject, but it will be the most affected child and the posiest kitten!"

"It is superficial," they said.

"Yes, for he does not know the true character of those for whom he works, nor care to know his subject. The smirking advertisements one sees are a good example of prettiness. But many artists, working for money alone, fall into this cheap, easy habit of pleasing the worst taste."

"Wouldn't you call 'The Vicar of Wakefield' a pretty book?" asked Henry.

"No, indeed," I answered; "it is far too genuine and lifelike to be merely pretty."

Henry insisted it was written for money, and was merely sweet and pleasing. The others disagreed with him so strenuously, I had hardly a chance to say, as before, that one might write for money the thing needful to be said. Virginia asked whether I did not think Jessie Wilcox Smith's drawings merely pretty? I said I thought them so now and then, but that sometimes her deep love and understanding of childhood made them shine with loveliness.

Marian said: "Some people are merely pretty and uninteresting."

"Often," I answered, "they want just that. They look for superficial admiration, and show only their superficial prettiness."

"But, of course, that isn't art," said Marian.

"Sometimes it is," answered Florence.

I spoke of sculpture as the Greek drama of visual art, a metaphor that appealed to those of them—Florence, Marian, Henry—who knew enough of Greek drama, with its masks and buskins, and its far-offness, to understand. The distance, the unlifelikeness of the material, is its charm. The colored German marbles lose artistic beauty in gaining lifelike color.

"In that case," said Alfred, "I should think the process of coloring and the newness of the material would interest one so much as to draw one's attention away from the statue."

"I don't think it is only that," I answered; "for surely wax works, which are quite common, with all their lifelike color and softness, do not give us the thrill of reality and beauty that we get from a marble statue."

"I think," said Henry, "it is just the coldness and hardness of marble, changed by the artist into shapes of life and warmth, that make it beautiful."

"Yes," I said, "exactly. The sculptor expresses his idea in every curve of the human form, and makes human shapes say universal things. They express by attitude and line power, beauty, tenderness. In the 'Mercury,' the lines of that headlong figure, to half-shut eyes, represent the curve and angle of flight itself."

Virginia now spoke of Michael Angelo, and his misdrawing of figures, which are none the less beautiful and powerful. I said he was so great a genius

that his genius, as often happens, overshadowed his shortcomings as a craftsman.

Here we came, I know not how, on the subject of drama. I said that to me it could never seem a perfect form of art—that is, the acted drama—because the actors usually obtruded their personality, and so broke in on the unity of expression—the creation of one mind—necessary to art. But the children, better at the art of looking on than I, and not so quick to note the significance of personality, said they forgot entirely the actors themselves, and felt as though the thing were a piece of life. Virginia and Florence said they felt as if they were the author, as if by being spectators they took part, and Virginia said she always did hate the villains!

Of architecture we observed that it appealed directly to the emotions, like music; that it made us feel, we knew not why, glad or sad, or calm or overawed. Virginia spoke of the Palais de Justice in Brussels, which made her feel very tiny; and this naturally brought us to speak of the feeling of reverence and awe.

"Whenever we feel small," I said, "and see another thing as vast, that vastness is in our minds, it is our own immense other self which overawes us."

They said they did not know what the feeling was. Virginia said: "When I have it, if I try to think of what it is, it is already gone. But the next time I see the same thing, perhaps some beautiful picture, that feeling is there again."

Virginia and Florence said they never had any reverence for particular people, because they were older, for instance. But, I said, at least they must have reverence for people, as such, for the self in all people. They granted that.

We spoke of the completeness of that architecture which showed outwardly its inner use, and the spirit of its land and people; of distinctly American problems, the skyscraper, the selfishness of New York builders, who did not consider the beauty of the whole city, and so wrought ugliness. The children gave examples, and did not agree with me altogether, Henry saying that a railroad station built like a Roman temple made you feel like travelling more than did the gloomy Grand Central. When he asked me how about the banks built like Greek temples, I said that might be more appropriate, since some of us did worship money!

He spoke of the library at Washington as fitting exactly to its use; its big, comfortable rooms made one feel like studying and reading all the day.

"I wonder if anything could make me feel like that!" said Virginia.

When the others had left, I took a walk with Alfred. He said: "I didn't exactly understand what you meant by my being big when I feel little."

"I meant," I said, "that when you feel awe before the immensity of the universe, under the stars, or by the sea, the thought of immensity is in yourself, and it is really yourself who become immense. You

realize your whole self. And before that realization your daily life and thoughts and your own small self seem very tiny. It is one part of yourself, the small part, standing in awe and wonder before that other immense self."

He understood that.

I went on: "I only mentioned it to-day, and did not expect you to understand. I often do this, either to give a suggestion for the next week, or else to see what really interests you."

"I think it is a good idea," he said.

TENTH MEETING

VIRGINIA could not come. We did have six present, however, as we had a visitor, Leo, a boy of sixteen.

Ruth brought with her a box of candy, given her by a sympathetic aunt, who has an opinion, I surmise, of our club. They all assured me that candy would not disturb their thoughts. Marian said: "There's nothing I can't do, and eat candy at the same time." I do, myself, think it was an improvement. We had a lively and interesting meeting, and much sweetness.

Marian wrote a paper on our meeting of two weeks past, following the notes I had made for Florence to use in her talk with Henry. It lacked Marian's usual originality, as it was built directly on my thought. She even used one phrase of mine, word for word, namely: "Life proves all things by creative action."

"Why did you use it?" I asked.

"Because," she said, "I didn't understand what it meant, and I wanted to ask you."

"I am glad," I said, "for it is a thing of which I meant to speak to-day. All action is creation and self-expression; everything is changing and in action all the time, because it is striving to come into better

relation with all other things. All art and all life is self-expression and action at every moment. We must create if we would be complete. That is why I love the active and creative life."

"Yes," said Marian, "I understand. "You had told us so before. But I didn't know it was what you meant by that sentence."

Now I read Marian's paper for this week:

"On December 6th the Seekers held a meeting, in which we continued our discussion on Art. We first considered the subject of Art in Poetry. Poetry differs from prose in two essential respects, namely, it is farther off, and it expresses the emotions, and does so in a musical form. Our standard for Art applies in poetry, as well as in other things. In connection with poetry we took up the subject of controversy in art, and especially in poetry. We decided that a controversial poem, or novel, is not good art because it is one-sided and incomplete. If a man writes on one side of a question he cannot be really in that sympathetic frame of mind that is necessary for the production of a good piece of art. We next took up art in music, and decided that music is the most complete or artistic of all arts, because it is farthest off, and expresses most completely our ideal. We also considered sculpture, and noted the fact that the sculpture is the expression in human form of the sculptor's ideas. We also considered painting, and after we had again applied our standard, Miss Sampter told us that every picture has a central object or

figure, the figure of most importance; that all the lines of the picture are direct toward it; and that in every good painting there must be contrast, and all the primary colors must be in it. It is complete in every way. All the colors, light and shade, and the idea of the painter well worked out, complete it. We considered, besides, the subject of architecture, and said that a building should in some measure express the purpose for which it was to be used."

Ruth said she understood all this, and could gather something of our last meeting. She did not quite see what was meant by a thing in art being "far off." Henry told her it meant that though removed from reason, and not clearly defined or lifelike, it appealed to our sympathies and emotions, and we understood it all the better. Then I read Henry's paper:

"In poetry and music, as in all the other arts, it is completeness, complete harmony, which makes a thing beautiful. Of all the arts the most beautiful is music. Harmony is everything in music, and is the principal in musical composition. A piece of music always closes with the first note of the scale, thus completing the chord. If it were otherwise we would say there was something lacking. The phrase itself shows us that what we want is completeness, though few people stop to think of its full meaning when they use it.

"We have said that the farther away we are from something, the more beautiful it seems. This is true of music, which, besides being the most beauti-

ful of arts, is the farthest away, for we cannot say anything definite with it, but must leave so much to the sympathy of the listeners. I like to think of this as a symbol of the beautiful completeness we hope to realize some far-distant day, and that then there will be something still more beautiful, that we shall know in times still farther off."

I thought this an excellent paper, and I told Henry so. I said I was glad he had written more of musical composition than I had been able to tell him.

We spoke of some of our past meetings. Florence said: "I couldn't make Henry see the difference between wit and humor."

"I see it now," he answered. "We discussed it in school."

"So did we," said Marian. "Isn't it queer?"

They had been taking up drama, too, and so their club and school work harmonized.

I said: "You have heard people speak of the art of life. To me it seems that to make an art of life, to live it as if it were our creation, our work of art, is the best way, the most complete and beautiful way. You remember, I spoke to you of the three ways of looking at life, of writing books, for instance: The scientific way, the philosophic way, the artistic way. One can live life in these three ways, too; but to me the artistic way seems best."

"Don't you think," asked Marian, "that if we lived as an art, we should be too apt to excuse ourselves?"

"How do you mean, Marian?"

"Because," she went on, "we should admit the shadows in life as well as the light."

"The shadows," I answered, "are not the wrong, the bad. How can you think so? Are shadows in a picture the mistakes in it? Shadows make the rhythm and the contrast; and in life would be repose and sleep. That necessary pulsation of activity and rest alone can make life whole and perfect."

"I see," said Marian, "that is true."

"As for blaming ourselves for things past, I think it is silly to do so."

"What," they asked, "is the scientific way of life?"

"It is," I answered, "living according to small definite truths, knowing certain separate things to be good or bad for us, and living according to that knowledge, without any general aim of life. It is to bathe regularly, to tell the truth carefully, to be honest, to look out for your neighbor, always because each one of these things is expedient in itself. The philosophic way is to see the final, complete good, and to want that once, to lose yourself and the beauty of your own life in the desperate effort to make the whole world perfect now. Suppose, for instance, that on Christmas a starving family came to the door of a middle-class man for food. If he were a scientist in his life he would send the poor family at once to the public food kitchen, with a ticket of recommendation, because he did not believe in indiscriminate charity and pauperism. If he were

a philosopher he would be horrified at the idea of any man lacking a dinner, and without further thought would give his whole dinner to the poor, and go without, and let his children go without. That is just what Bronson Alcott did—the typical philosopher in life—who neglected his own family for the good of the universe."

"I have often known of people," said Henry, "who went out to do charity and neglected their families."

"Yes," I said, "but that is sometimes for still worse reasons. Now what would the artist in life do? He would be full of the delight of Christmas feeling; and he would either share his dinner with the other man—according to circumstances—or ask him in to his table, if the poor children were not too dirty. He would look out for himself and for the other man, and do it gracefully, beautifully. He knows that first of all he must make his own life sane and beautiful, but he wants to include as many other lives as he can in that life of his, and to make all his relations with men beautiful."

"What you call the philosophic way," said Ruth, "is what I had always called the artistic way."

"That is," I said, "because you have all of you had a ridiculous, false idea of what the artist is. The scientific life is the life according to particular truths, without an aim. The philosophic life is the life dreaming of supreme good, and neglecting the particular, individual beauty of life."

"But doesn't the philosophic way help toward that good?" asked Henry.

"Yes," I said, "though often it tries only impracticable schemes. The artistic way combines and transcends the two. For the artist must have knowledge of facts, must know science, and must love supreme good, as well. Facts according to the supreme good, life made beautiful to be like completeness, that is the artistic life. It includes both the scientific and the philosophic."

"It is as it were the middle way?" asked Ruth.

"Yes," I said, "because beauty includes all extremes."

Henry remarked: "It may be the best way, but I wouldn't guarantee to live according to it."

I smiled. "You mean," I said, "that you didn't like the idea of asking the poor man in to dinner?" He assented. "But you misunderstood me. That was only a picture, a story, not a law. If we make large laws for life—such laws as those of art—we shall avoid petty moralizing, which I, for one, detest. We shall see that every circumstance alters the case.

"It's just this petty moralizing that is unnecessary, when one has big laws and standards which he can use in life, each for himself."

We did come very near having a discussion on truth-telling, but I stopped it at once. I was glad to discover, however, that Ruth is not a stickler for literal truth under all circumstances.

"I don't like little laws laid down," I said, "be-

cause they are never true and necessary in all cases. They make me feel rebellious."

"Yes," said Marian, "they make one feel contrary, and want to do just the opposite."

I spoke of the undeniable fact that all great action, all history sprang from imaginative thought, that a deed had to be imagined before it could be done, that all history was inspired by the bards and prophets. I spoke of even such scientific theories as evolution springing from imaginative thought. They all seemed to have realized this before, and none dissented. I read to them O'Shawnessy's Ode, "We are the Music-makers."

Florence said: "We spoke of the thinker's influence lately, at home. But I always thought of those great men, not as poets, but as philosophers."

"Yes," I answered, "they often were. But they were poets, too. The greatest artist—as I showed you—is a scientist and philosopher as well. Goethe to me seems the best example of such a complete man. His life was so many-sided, and yet so artistic, so definite in its aim; it might stand as an example of the artistic life."

Now, what the children seemed to know of Goethe was that he had a great many love affairs, and did not behave well in any of them. Marian and Henry had a clearer idea, and knew this was not the whole or the chief part of his life, nor quite so faulty as represented. Henry said: "He could appreciate the

good points in a woman without always falling in love with her."

When Ruth said she didn't know anything of Goethe but his lover's weakness, Marian turned on her with: "Now, isn't it a shame to know that of him, and nothing else!"

I told them again that as every work of art was a symbol of completeness, so every self, being a self, symbolized the complete self of understanding and unity; every man was a symbol of completeness, of the Divine Self.

Before we went on to enumerate for ourselves the laws of art, now that we all agreed they would be one with the laws of life, I wished to read aloud some slips from a Ruskin calendar, which Ruth had brought me two weeks before. The most fruitful of conversation were the following:

"All are to be men of genius in their degree—rivulets or rivers, it does not matter, so that the souls be clear and pure."

This, they said, was exactly our idea of genius in all.

"Good work is never done for hatred, any more than for hire—but for love only."

Surely, then, not for controversy, we said.

"Neither a great fact, nor a great man, nor a great poem, nor a great picture, nor any other great thing, can be fathomed to the bottom in a moment of time."

"Every great man is always being helped by every-

body, for his gift is to get good out of all things and all persons."

This, I reminded them, was what we had said when we spoke of the good and bad, that we must use all things for good.

"The ennobling difference between one man and another—between one animal and another—is precisely in this, that one feels more than another."

"Doesn't it seem," said Florence, "as if Ruskin had written those papers especially for us?"

"That last one," I said, "expresses exactly our idea; here 'feeling' means the same as 'sympathy,' or 'feeling with.' So you find, all through the old books, the striving for this same truth, always vaguely expressed, never fully understood, as an ideal, as a religion of life."

Ruth asked: "Don't you think all great religions have always believed in that final unity?"

"Not quite in this way," I answered. "They have vaguely striven for it and implied it, but never realized it as the one meaning in life, the moving force of the universe."

I gave each of them a pencil and a piece of paper, and said we would find out and write down what were the chief laws of all arts, and then follow that written paper throughout our meetings. I said: "It looks like a party, with the candy and the paper and pencils."

"Yes," said Florence; "and now we are going to play a guessing game!"

The first law upon which we decided, after some conversation, was:

1. Art is the symbol of completeness, in a definite shape.

On this last part, "in a definite shape," I especially insisted, showing them how the definite, the particular, the finite—the drop as opposed to the mist—symbolized completeness. I said for them Goethe's poem, "Ueber allen Gipfeln," to show them how so short, clearcut and simple a thing gave us the sense of immensity.

Henry said he had thought at one time that if one only knew the truth, it was not necessary to be a good orator; one had simply to state the truth. But now he believed the form an essential part of the thought.

Marian said something of the artistic life as meaning one must have a single aim. I answered her it might be so, but the single aim would be immense and inclusive. Now we went on to the second law, which we formulated thus:

2. Art is self-expression and self-fulfilment.

Self-expression means action, creation. "Thinking, writing, the work of the artist is action," I said. They understood. I quoted: "There is only one gift worth giving, and that is one's self." "To give one's self," I said, "that is action, that is life, creation and fulfilment."

"How so fulfilment?" asked Marian.

"Because it is always fulfilment to do the thing we love to do. Now what comes next?"

Henry said: "To leave out the distracting; to leave out detail."

"Not necessarily detail," I answered; "certain definite details are essential."

They said to leave out the irrelevant, the inharmonious, the unnecessary. I said:

3. To leave out the unimportant.

"Can you see," I asked, "how that will apply to life?"

4. Must have variety and many-sidedness.

That is, contrast, rhythm, the all-roundness which makes the whole.

We had just begun to speak of the next law when I was called from the room.

As I returned, Henry said to me: "Well, then, let us write down: 'must not be for or against.'"

So they had formulated it while I was away. I answered: "Rather let us use the word 'partisan,' which means part, not whole."

5. Must not be partisan, and must be sympathetic.

Now, I said, art,

6. Must give the impression of truth.

I did not linger on this point, and was glad the children accepted it without question, for I wanted more time to explain it.

I went on to the last law, which was the only one I had some trouble in making clear. I asked why was

the photograph inartistic? They said because of inharmonious details. I asked, why is the statue more beautiful than wax works? Henry spoke again of the "distance" of material, which just thereby appealed to the sympathies. I wanted to speak of the artist's aloofness, how he was creator of his work, within it, and yet around it and above it. They did not understand. They said, if he were above it, he would be unsympathetic. They did not understand the creator's attitude toward himself, the created; the dramatic attitude in life, in which we are both actor and spectator. Marian said she thought she understood it. "Haven't you ever laughed at yourself?" she asked the others.

"I have sworn at myself," said Leo.

I meant to pass by the subject, and leave out the last law, rather than arouse a self-consciousness, which was the opposite of what I hoped to awaken. But unintentionally the conversation led to a better understanding.

I spoke again of reverence, as I had done to Alfred, of the small self awed in supreme moments, before the immensity of its whole self.

"Do you mean," asked Leo, "that it makes us feel how small we are?"

I tried to make it clear. I spoke of the feeling of nothingness that overcomes us, when we stand under the stars at night, and realize them as worlds and suns, and our planet as a dot of light in immensity.

They had all felt so, except Henry.

He said: "It does not make me feel small. I feel that I am a part of it all, and one with the universe."

"Yours is the true feeling," I answered, "for you are, indeed, a part of it, and the realization of it is within yourself. A kitten in your place would not feel it."

"I know," said Marian, "that many people do not feel it. For I have sometimes walked with some one out in the night, or by the sea, and could not speak. And suddenly they said some trivial thing, which showed they did not feel as I did."

Alfred said he felt overawed by the sea, because it was so strong and big.

"You mean," I asked, "that it makes you feel helpless before its might?"

"Yes."

"It has been said," Henry went on, "that one cannot be an astronomer and not worship. I believe it is true."

"And now," I said, "we are coming to the seventh law after all. For by aloofness I mean that the artist, during his act of creation, feels his own immense self, feels the whole universe, and sees himself and all other things as a part in relation to it."

"I have felt that way sometimes," said Florence, "just for a moment."

"It is a momentary realization," I answered.

"Don't you think," asked Ruth, "that it is a superior feeling, though; a cold, perfect feeling?"

"No," I answered; "though it lifts us above petty concern for ourselves, it does not lift us out of sympathy and action."

Henry said: "When I go to Riverside and see all the lights, and think of the millions of people, I feel them all."

It reminded me of the day Marian had said she felt so when she thought of all the windows and rooms in all the apartment houses.

"Suppose," I asked, "that you had failed in a very important examination, Henry, would you feel bad?"

"Yes," he said, "if it were a very, *very* important one."

"Then, if you went to Riverside Drive and forgot yourself in that immense feeling, when you returned home you would not only be over your sore, bitter disappointment, but you would be full of energy to begin work again."

"Yes," he answered, "I would."

"So, you see, it is a creative, sympathetic, living aloofness, not cold and far off."

We put down for the seventh law:

7. Aloofness.

Knowing what we meant thereby.

Ruth said she had noticed that the artistic life was a selfish ideal.

"Yes," I said, "selfish in the best sense."

"It is self-development, you mean," said Alfred.

"Yes," I answered, "and that selfishness includes the whole world."

"Why use the word 'selfishness,' then," asked Marian, "that has been used in another sense?"

We spent the rest of the time telling Leo our idea of God and progress. Henry, Ruth, Florence and Marian did it; Florence told him of complete human sympathy, Marian of progress toward it as the good, Henry explained the poem, "Abou ben Adhem," and Ruth—when Leo objected that knowing men was not knowing God—quoted a passage from the Bible to show it was.

"I always think of God as a supreme power," said Leo.

I told him something of our idea. What I cared for was to hear the others talk. All, except Henry, seemed satisfied with a merely human conception of self—that is, Florence set the key, and all but Henry kept the tune. He spoke of the "something outside."

I remarked that, as I had foreseen, we no longer used the word God.

"I use it to myself," said Ruth.

Henry said: "I use it when I speak to other people; but not here, because we know what we mean, without saying it."

Marian said: "We have made a vocabulary of our own. Ought we to?"

"Yes," I said. "Perhaps we can impose it on others?"

"I don't think that would be fair or right," she answered.

"Why not? That is just what every great thinker has done. He has imposed a new vocabulary upon the world. Unless our words are good and great and true, they will not last."

ELEVENTH MEETING

I READ Virginia's paper of two weeks ago:

DISCUSSION ON ART

"Anything to be really beautiful must be complete. The reason for this is that it gives us that idea of completeness which the universe possesses. A picture in which every detail is painted may be pretty, but it is not beautiful. When you look at a person you look at his face and the expression of it. In anything on which you set your eyes, you see only the part that interests you. Therefore a good picture or a book should only have that part brought forth, and the rest and unimportant parts should be kept in the background. In fact, they should only be there to make the important thing more interesting; to make it stand out."

Then I read Henry's paper:

"At our last meeting we reviewed all that we had said about art. We spoke of the three kinds of life, the artistic, philosophic and scientific, and agreed that the artistic life is the one we care for. We made a list of those things which are necessary in art, so that we can refer to them, and apply them in judging life.

"Good art

1. is a symbol of completeness in a definite form.
2. is self-expression and self-fulfilment.
3. must leave out unimportant detail.
4. must have variety and many-sidedness.
5. must not be partisan, and must be sympathetic.
6. gives the impression of truth.
7. ——"

The last law, the idea of aloofness, of being above as well as within life, of being actor and spectator at once, they do not understand, and I made no further effort to explain. Henry said he left it out—for that reason—when writing his paper.

I said Henry had mentioned we did prefer and choose the artistic life. But why? I suspected, from something they said, that they did not grasp the reasons.

Virginia said she didn't care what the reasons were, she knew she liked it best. The reasons, at any rate, had not impressed them. So I repeated what I had said, of the artistic life including the other two, of how the artist must know science and love goodness before he can create beauty.

"Then," said Florence, "the great artists were philosophers?"

"Always," I answered. "Take the ancient religious writings, such as the Vedas and the Bible. They were always poems, the work of artists who were also philosophers and scientists."

"Scientists?" asked Marian incredulously.

"Surely," I answered, "men such as Moses, who gave laws on sanitation and daily life, were the scientists of their time."

"An artist must understand science," said Virginia, "natural science, if he wants to paint. And he must know physiology, too. I am beginning to realize that at school."

Some one mentioned Franklin. "Was he more scientist, or philosopher, or artist in his life?"

"I think he was a philosopher," said Virginia.

"No," Marian answered, "he just gathered a lot of bromidic proverbs, that were as old as the world, and said them over in an impressive way."

"But they were philosophical," Virginia protested.

"No," said Marian, "I don't think so. They were scientific, for they dealt with little disjointed parts of life."

I told them I wanted to paraphrase a certain verse in the Bible, the verse:

"Faith, Hope and Charity, but the greatest of these is Charity."

"How?" asked Ruth, much interested.

"I would say," I went on, "Truth, Goodness and Beauty, but the greatest of these is Beauty'—because it includes the other two."

Now I changed the first law into terms of life:

"Life is a symbol of the complete Self, in a definite shape."

Life must express that Self in definite and individual lines, that is, in beauty.

I spoke again of small and great genius, of art expressing a lesser or a greater completeness, of "Jenny Kissed Me" and "Faust," Florence's examples. "With people you must have noticed the same thing. Some people whose lives seem very limited, who understand and know little, still have such harmonious natures that in their spheres they seem complete. But with still other people you feel that their lives are much larger, that they grasp more of life and possess more, because they understand more. The more we understand, sympathize and love, the larger is our life."

Marian looked puzzled.

"What is it, Marian?" I asked.

"Why," she said, "should some people be larger and more complete than others?"

"How do you mean, Marian?"

"Why is it so? Why aren't we all alike?"

"If we were," said Henry, "it would be very monotonous."

"Oh, I know that," said Marian. "But why is it so, anyway?"

"Marian always asks the unanswerable," I said. "And still—if we believe in progress, in the evolution of self, don't you see?—some selves are more developed than others."

"If we believed in transmigration," said Marian, "it would be easy to understand."

"You know," I answered, "what I think of transmigration. But whether there be transmigration in

the usual sense, or not, I think we all believe that in some way we have lived until now, that we are not created in one moment, that we evolve throughout all time."

And now I made a mistake, tried an experiment that was not successful. I have had misgivings, now and then—unfounded ones, I believe to-day—as to the value, to young people, of a philosophy of life which does not at once directly and concretely affect their manner of living, but does so indirectly and slowly through affecting their tastes, opinions and desires.

One of the girls happened to speak of the relation of parents and children. I had realized for a long time that this was among the pressing problems of youth—especially of some of these particular young people—and instead of keeping to my prepared work, I took advantage of the remark, and launched off into that bottomless subject—without a pilot.

I said: "I think it is one of the gravest—perhaps the only grave problem—of your lives, and we might as well try to solve it now, if we can. What shall we do with our parents?"

There came a flood of ideas and confessions. I made so personal a call upon each one, and intimated that I already knew so much of their lives, that they were frank and open with me, and said to me, without thinking, much more, I am sure, than they would willingly and deliberately have said to each other. They spoke as if to me alone, even mentioned

personal circumstances of which I alone had knowledge. Naturally, I will not write down that conversation.

I told them the difficulty arose from a change for the better in the relation between children and parents, and that neither one nor the other had fully realized the change. The old relation of fearing reverence had been changed to that of love and companionship. I said, mock-seriously:

"Of course, we do know more than our parents can possibly know, and we are quite able to judge everything for ourselves, and so we resent being told to do things——"

Marian interrupted me with a solemn: "Oh, no!" and it was a moment before they all realized that I was joking.

"But, truly," I went on, "we are so used to having, and fond of having, our own way, that we do chafe and even feel contradictory the moment we are ordered to do anything. Don't you, Alfred?"

"No," said Alfred; "only I don't like to stop if I have anything else to do."

"I hate," Marian said, "to be told to do anything which I don't want to do, and for which I see no reason: going to see people whom I dislike, and who bore me, for instance."

"There," I answered, "the reason is clear. I remember feeling so myself, and I am not glad that I was given my own way. Young people must know and see and tolerate all sorts of folks, even pokey old

relations, so that they may learn to know people and be able to choose for themselves as they grow older. To know many is to find some."

With that they agreed.

"But," I went on, "the trouble is not so much with what you want or don't want to do, as with irritability and impudence."

"You mean 'sassing' your parents?" asked Virginia.

"Yes."

"I 'sass' mine," she said, "when I think they will like it. I wheedle my parents, and so I get what I want without being disagreeable."

"Oh, *you* don't count, Virginia," I went on, "but what I mean is answering back, being unkind and contradictory when we would rather not, doing all sorts of regrettable things because we are in a temper, and then afterward feeling mean, sore and despicable, and knowing that we were wrong. That sort of ugliness and irritation, if it's not stopped, makes mean, ugly, irritable characters."

"I know just what you mean," said Marian, "and I know exactly what I think of other people who are like that."

"It is ugly," I said. "I dislike it, because it is not beautiful. How can any one live a beautiful, harmonious life who begins by being out of harmony in his relation with the person whom he loves? For that is the truth. Children often love dearly the parent with whom they are always disagreeing. How

shall we get understanding and unity and sympathy in life if we cannot get it with those nearest us, those we love?"

"Of course," said Henry, "our idea of life, of complete sympathy, is against all that kind of thing."

"It is much easier," said Marian, "to know what is right than to do it."

We all agreed.

"But why," I said, "should we suffer regrets, and do ugly things, when there must be some way to stop it?"

"What way?" asked Marian.

"Well, first, what is our feeling toward older people?"

"Pity," said Virginia.

"How?" we all asked rather indignantly.

"Well," she went on, "you get up for an old woman in the car, because you are sorry for her, so that she shouldn't flop all over your shins."

"Pity for the other people!" said Florence.

(We are always undecided in the club whether to put Virginia out of the room or whether to hug her. So, in our indecision, we leave her alone.)

I said: "We used to be told to reverence the old. I say to you, reverence every one. If you think of self as a symbol of the complete Self, as the holy thing, then you will reverence the self in every human being, in every creature."

"I don't think," said Virginia, "that we have much sympathy with the self in animals we kill to eat."

"That," I answered, "is another question. It has nothing to do with what we are saying now."

"I think it has," she protested.

"Then," I said, "if you reverence self, and understand and respect the self in every person, how could you quarrel with any one?"

"You expect us to know an awful lot," said Virginia, "to know every one."

"Certainly," I answered. "Is not that our idea, to reach what we desire through understanding and sympathy with every one?"

They said they couldn't respect every one. Some people they couldn't help, as Henry said, pitying.

I objected strenuously to that word. All but Henry agreed with me. It is always a word of scorn.

They spoke of "feeling sorry for" people who had suffered some loss, feeling sorry, but not pitying.

"Then," said Marian, "one ought not to say 'sorry for' but 'sorry with.' "

Virginia said if a girl's mother had died, and one had not known the mother, one might be sorry for her, but not sorry with her. They had a little argument, and to stop it I said one might be both sorry for and sorry with, but certainly one would have the "with" feeling.

Ruth objected that when there was an argument I always made both sides right.

"Why not?" I asked. "By the light of complete vision we do see most things as true which first seemed contradictory. Our idea of completeness is to in-

clude many truths, and show them to be the same truth."

She admitted that.

Marian spoke of people she liked, but could not respect.

"If you knew them from the inside," I said, "as they know themselves, you might feel otherwise."

"Yes," said Virginia, "I have always thought that if anybody knew all about me, knew me just as I know myself, they could not help liking me."

I said: "It seems not much to expect of us, to understand our parents, who are so anxious for an understanding, and whom we love. After all, we do owe them something—when you consider that but for them we would not be here; and we are most of us rather glad that we are here."

"Yes," said Marian, "I would like to stay a while longer."

Now we spoke of many things, many personal things, of quarrels and how to avoid them. Virginia amused us by saying people often quarreled with her, but she never quarreled with them.

Marian said: "If there's one thing which makes people feel mean, angry, self-reproachful and small, it is to try to quarrel with some one who won't be made angry."

"Naturally," I said, "they can't help comparing themselves with the other person."

"Yes," said Florence, "I am always sorry and angry at myself when the other person keeps cool or

is hurt. But when the other person gets angry, too, I feel as if I were right."

"It's an ugly thing to be angry," I said; "it makes us so small, shuts us in."

"How do you mean?" asked Marian.

"It cuts us off from that other person, makes it impossible to understand at least him, and so keeps us from completeness and harmony, actually robs us of part of ourself."

Was it all the children's fault, they asked, when children and parents failed to understand each other?

"As it takes two to make a quarrel," I answered, "so it takes two to make a misunderstanding. But *one* can stop it. Remember that older people have often gone through trials in life that have shaken their nerves and made them sensitive and irritable to little annoyances."

Marian asked: "Do you mean fussy?"

"Yes," I said, "and it is easy to understand. But the fact that in many families some of the children get along well with the parents, and others do not, proves that at least some of the responsibility rests with the children."

We spoke of self-control, of standing, as it were, outside and above ourselves—the idea of aloofness—and not working like a machine for the impulse of the moment. I said I had known people who had this trouble in youth, and stopped it with a strong resolution, because they saw it was a bad, an ugly and a controllable thing. Henry spoke of the old plan

of counting a hundred before saying anything. We none of us liked the idea, possibly because we were tired of it; I said, for one, that I did not see how counting a hundred could make me change my mind, whereas thinking might. I said the best plan was to put one's self at once, as it were, inside the other person, and then one could not possibly say the disagreeable thing. Henry, it seems, has only one difficulty, that of wanting to express or keep his own opinion at the expense of contradicting his elders. I said one had always the right to express one's opinion, but one might also do it as an opinion, say "I think," or "I believe"; that one might always consider how the thing said would impress the person listening. Marian spoke of people who irritate you by their presence, whom you dislike and who grate on you, no matter what they may do or say. Then I told them of the saving sense of humor; how, if we resolve to be amused by people in a pleasant, genial way, to see the humor in human life, we may avoid being hurt by them or hurting them in return.

Virginia especially agreed with me, cited incidents of being amused by the disagreeable, and spoke of Dickens as one who could be amused by all sorts of people, even the most "bromidic" or disagreeable. Marian said Dickens was amused by every one but his heroes and heroines. They almost always seemed a hardship to him and to others.

I said we must use every one for our good. That

word to "use people" had been employed in a bad sense, but I meant it in a good sense.

"Whenever you are with any one you don't like, think at once what you can get out of that meeting. Every human being has something for you, and you for him. Self always wants to find self."

Marian and Ruth immediately thought of people from whom they could get nothing. Virginia, who does get something from everything, remarked that some people seemed to have very little self.

"To be a human being at all," I answered, "how much of self one must have, compared with the animals!"

"I suppose," said she; "that is why some people, who have not much, remind me of animals."

I said I was sorry we had digressed so far, and feared we had not arrived anywhere, after all. Florence said she liked to confess her sins. And Marian answered her that it was a bad habit.

"It is all," said Marian, "what I have heard before, and know to be true, and don't do, anyway."

"Nothing new?" I asked. "Not even the plan of trying to feel at once just what the other person is feeling?"

"Oh, yes, that, perhaps," she said.

Marian seemed to think I had given her a great many dreadful "slams"; but I could not see it so. "I am sure I did not," I said. "Oh, no," she answered quite sarcastically, "not at all." But she seemed to bear me no ill-will. Virginia said I wanted

them to be good and virtuous. No, I said, I had not thought of that.

"Perhaps," she suggested, "good but not virtuous, or virtuous but not good?"

I answered: "All I want you to do is to satisfy yourselves."

"Is that all!" exclaimed Marian. "After you told us how we could never be wholly satisfied, how we should always want something more!"

"The beautiful life must be harmonious," I said. "Disjointed beauty is not beautiful. You remember, we spoke of the city, how a beautiful house might be made to look not at all beautiful by being placed next to a high wall, or in any position where it did not fit; how the city could not be beautiful until all the people combined to build a harmonious city."

"By itself the house would be beautiful, anyway," they said.

"Yes," I answered, "but in ugly surroundings its beauty would be half lost."

Virginia said: "If I saw a very beautiful little girl between two ugly monkeys, I think the little girl would look all the more beautiful."

Marian answered: "I would immediately imagine her petting or fondling the two monkeys, and then it would look beautiful."

It turned out, however, that Virginia's monkeys were figurative, and that she meant ugly children. This was disconcerting to Ruth, Marian and Florence, and caused prolonged giggles.

I said that would simply be contrast, not discord, that contrast might please and make even the ugly look beautiful, but discord, two beautiful houses so placed together that neither looked well, two colors that "killed" each other, these were ugly. Beauty had to find for itself or make for itself the right surroundings, in order to be truly beautiful.

Florence said: "I think it is a shame people should be liked just for their looks. I know girls who are liked just because they are pretty, when there's nothing to them, and others who are homely, but much nicer, who are liked less. I try never to let it influence me."

Henry said he never did let it; that he always liked people for what they really were, and not for looks.

"I can't help it," said Virginia. "I know a girl who is horrid in every way, and when she is away I can't bear her; but the minute I see her I forgive her, because she is so beautiful."

"Perhaps," I said, "if you knew her from the inside, as she knows herself, you might think that no one could help liking her."

"No," said Virginia; "she's one of the people who, I feel sure, cannot think that of herself."

Marian agreed with Virginia. She said when she met people she was interested in the good-looking ones, and always judged them by their faces.

"That is different," I said, "to judge people by the character written in their faces, as we judge them by all things. But though all beauty is good, the beauty of the personality, of life itself, is surely best."

TWELFTH MEETING

THROUGH inevitable circumstances the club had been discontinued for six weeks. But I was in personal touch with all the members during this interval.

"We have not met for so long," I said, "I wonder whether you have forgotten anything of what we had done?"

They all assured me that it was clear in their minds. Henry said: "It has had time to sink in."

"I am glad," I went on, "that we happened to stop at the end of a part; that now we begin anew at a new thing. But I am a little afraid to go on. For now we are going to speak of morals, of goodness."

"Why are you afraid?" asked Marian.

"Because I am so afraid we are going to moralize, to become petty."

"Don't be afraid of that," said Marian; "I have had too much experience to be likely to do it."

"Well, then," I said, "first of all we must find out what we consider good, what we mean by the good—that misused word—and to distinguish between the true and the artificial good. Have you any ideas about it?"

None of them had any definite idea of what they meant by the good, or of the distinction between the

goody-goodiness which repelled them, and the goodness which they loved. They thought immediately of "good" people who are unlovable or stupid. Virginia and Marian exchanged remarks about a girl they had met that morning at Sunday-school; and all through the meeting, until I found effective means to stop them, they referred to her as an example.

"Now," I said, "I will tell you of the true good, and by the light of it you will clearly distinguish the artificial. You remember the first law of art."

Henry had the paper with him. It was: "Art is a symbol of completeness in a definite shape."

"So the good, too, is a symbol of completeness in a definite shape," I said. "Goodness is always of relation. It means the right relation, sympathy and unity of those who know each other. And the good man is the man who makes a complete world, a symbol of the perfect awakened universe, out of those few people whom he knows—that is, of whose existence he is aware—and of all that he knows in the universe, which is a small part of the whole. He makes it complete and perfect, by making all his relations with life complete, and understanding and beautiful. You realize that a Robinson Crusoe, alone on his desert island, if he never expected to see human beings again, could not be either good or bad."

"Yes, he could," said Virginia, "in the way he treated the animals."

"That is right," I answered. "If you include the animals as selves, he could still be good or bad in

his relation with them. But you see that goodness is of relation. It is having our relations right, good and sympathetic, as far as they reach.

"That, then, is the law, the only law. All moralities and systems were made to uphold and fulfil that law, and they all change with the needs of man and his circumstances, but that one law is always the same, is always true, is the spirit which makes all actions either good or bad. For I believe there is no action in itself either good or bad, but all must be tested by this law. 'Is it good?' means: Does it make for true and understanding relations between men? Do you agree with me?"

"Yes," they said.

"Take the laws of Moses, or any system of laws," I went on, "and you will see that they were made by men, who realized in themselves the one supreme law, the law of progress toward the human whole. These systems of laws, if followed by people incapable of seeing the broad way for themselves, would lead toward that end. But the lesser laws change with circumstance, as a path changes with the landscape. Take the Mosaic laws. The first laws, 'Thou shalt have no other God,' 'Thou shalt not take his name in vain,' and 'Thou shalt keep the Sabbath,' seem to us now much less important than some later laws, such as 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not kill,' and so on. But if you stop to think, you will see that these first were most necessary; for the people's idea of God, so much more limited than ours, was

still, like ours, the reason for their morality, the law of laws, the 'I Am' that gave meaning to goodness. In their condition, if they had not reverenced and feared God, they would not have kept the laws of Moses. The actions or ways of life we often hear called good, but which arouse in us a feeling of contempt, as if it were goody-goodiness, or self-righteousness, are actions according to petty laws of goodness, by people who do not know the spirit, the great law above all laws. Sometimes they are actions no longer good at all, acted according to petty laws that we have passed. Do you see what I mean?"

"Give me an example of what you mean," Marian said.

"Many conventions are an example," said Henry.

"Yes, they may be," I answered.

"Conventions," said Virginia, "are neither right nor wrong."

"No," I answered, "they are usually a matter of convenience. But some people do make the mistake of calling them right or wrong. Then again you will hear people argue whether or not it is right to tell the truth, under all circumstances."

"You mean," Henry said, "that they argue whether or not it is good to tell the truth as truth, not whether the truth will help us toward better relation."

"Exactly."

"I think," said Virginia, "to tell the truth to hurt people's feelings is wicked."

Now they were just going to have an argument as to truth-telling, when I reminded them that this was what we did not want to do.

Marian spoke of school laws, and said that these were often without force or reason, and that she saw no great harm in breaking them. When I remembered the folly of laws in many schools, I could not disagree with her. "Of course," she said, "one gets out of sympathy with that class of mortals called teachers."

"Hardly," said I, "if one is honest at all times. And perhaps the meanest, most cowardly lie is the lie of evasion and shirking of punishment in such a case."

Henry said: "Teachers ought not to ask boys and girls, 'did you do this or that?' "

"You are right," I answered; "but, again, no boy or girl of spirit, courage and character would hesitate to answer truthfully.

"Self-sacrifice," I said, "is a good example of the sort of action that is called good in itself, when it is not at all so, but has only a definite and limited purpose in the scheme. I wish to explain it to you. But first I want to be sure that you understand this idea of good. Is it new to you?"

"Yes," said Marian, "I never thought of it in that way before."

"You all have said so little," I went on, "I am afraid you may not fully understand."

"There is nothing to say," answered Marian, "for it grows so naturally out of everything we have done."

"Our whole thought is like a chain," said Virginia, "link within link."

"Alfred," I said, "you are so silent, you don't give us a chance to see how bright you are. Now, tell me, what is the good? What do I mean? I want to be sure you understand."

He hesitated. "The good is completeness, harmony."

"Yes," I said, "but I want it more definitely. The good is a sign of that completeness. To the truly good man, as much as he knows of the world, or dreams of it, is his whole self. And he wants that whole self to be right. The good man cannot be wholly good until every one else is so. The world must be perfect to satisfy his desire for good."

Ruth said: "It is what you told us before, that we cannot be perfect unless the universe is perfect. But it seems to me that a man may be just as good, though others are bad."

"Yes," I said, "he can do his best to fill out the gaps and make his relations right, but his goodness will not wholly satisfy him. On the other hand, the self-righteous man, who lives according to precepts and rules, is easily satisfied with himself. Goodness is beauty. The good is always the beautiful action. But goodness, according to laws and precepts which are outworn, which we have left behind us, is no longer beautiful for us."

Virginia pointed out that in this, then, goodness

differed from art, for the objects of art remained beautiful through hundreds of years.

"Six hundred years ago," she said, "men painted pictures which probably cannot be equalled to-day."

"But," I answered, "a man trying to paint like Raphael now, would not paint beautifully."

"No," said she; "but if he tried to paint like Franz Hals or Rembrandt he might."

"Not at all," I answered.

"Of course," she admitted, "he would have to paint like himself, to be himself."

"Surely," said I, "and so with goodness. Each man has his own particular goodness, according to his circumstances and nature. But, just as a beautiful picture is eternally beautiful, so goodness in the past, though it no longer seems good to us for practice, is always delightful to think of, though it would be horrible to imitate. For instance, the self-imposed poverty of St. Francis of Assisi."

We spoke of asceticism and the ideals of self-sacrifice, and then of self-sacrifice itself, as preached in our own lives.

"In the first place," I said, "we must get clear in our minds the meaning of happiness. People will say to you again and again that the aim of life is happiness. But if each one of us were to speak of happiness, and use the same word, we would each mean something different. Now, what is happiness?"

"It is having fun," said Virginia.

"Yes," I said, "that is all right. But that's only

repeating the same thing. What is it that makes us happy?"

Florence answered: "Having what you like."

"Yes," I said, "but more than that. It is having what you want most. If you liked pie, but you liked ice cream better, then pie wouldn't satisfy you, would it?"

"No."

"What would?"

"Ice cream and pie both," said Florence.

We decided, however, after some thought, that we would give up pie for ice cream. "And this," I said, "is the meaning of self-sacrifice. It is giving up what we want for something we want still more. And as the thing we want most of all, and for which we would give up everything else, is complete harmony, sympathy and understanding, you see that in all our self-sacrifices we are giving up what we want for what we want still more. We are giving up our smaller for our larger self."

"That is just what Booker T. Washington said at the lecture this morning," Virginia went on. "He said he had never made a single sacrifice, but he had always done the thing he loved to do most. It is fun to do good. It makes us feel so virtuous. And we do it because we like most to see other people happy."

"That is what I mean, Virginia."

"I don't think it is so, always," said Ruth. "I think often people are just forced to give up things

and sacrifice themselves, when they don't like it at all."

"That's different," I said, "if it is enforced. I meant voluntary self-sacrifice."

"Even so," she went on, "suppose you are going out somewhere, and you have to stay at home with some person who is ill, just because you are asked to do it. You don't like it, but you do it, anyway."

"Probably," I answered, "you love that person and that person's pleasure far more than you do, say, the theatre."

"No," said Ruth, "perhaps you don't love the person at all."

"But you love to feel virtuous," Virginia said, "and all the time you stay at home you are saying bad things, mentally, about that person."

"But you stay from choice, you please your bigger self and its demands for beauty," I went on; "you give up what you want for what you want more."

"Yes," Virginia said, "for you would be uncomfortable and unhappy if you went."

"You see how silly and childish it is," I continued, "to give up anything for nothing, to deny yourself pleasures, to make sacrifices for their own sake. That is one of the false virtues which make people self-righteous, 'goody-goody' and ridiculous. I know a girl who gave up eating butter during Lent because she liked butter, and she thought it noble to deny herself."

"Yes," said Virginia, "and I know girls who won't

take sundaes during Lent, but drink sodas instead, because they like sundaes better."

I read aloud to them a Ruskin quotation that Ruth had brought some time ago:

"Recollect that 'mors' means death, and delaying; and 'vita' means life, and growing; and try always, not to mortify yourself, but to vivify yourself."

"You see," I said, "I believe in being selfish, in the very largest sense. I believe the whole world, all that I know and love, to be my whole self, and I want to make that as good, as true, as harmonious as I can. What people usually call selfishness is only self-limitation, cutting yourself off."

"Yes; it is making yourself little."

"Exactly. Take selfish people, and you will find that they are not only making others unhappy, but making their own lives very small and narrow."

"They are unhappy themselves," said Florence.

I told them a story of three apple seedlings. The first said: "I will not grow; there is so little room; I will not help crowd out the others." He died, a weakling. The second said: "I will not bear apples, because the effort might spoil the glossy appearance and fulness of my foliage." He was good to look at, but—useless. The third one said: "Apple-trees were made to bear apples. I like to do it, I want to do it, and I will." And he did, and so served himself and many beside.

"I never could understand the morality," I said, "that tells us to live only for others."

"It would be impossible," said Henry; "one has to live first for one's self."

"And last for one's self," I went on, "for that biggest self which is our own life in relation with all that we know. If we lived only for others, others would still live for others, and so on, with no end and no sense. It is like that idea of living for future generations."

"What of it?" asked Marian. "I am particularly interested."

"That we shall live for future generations, and the future generations shall live also for future generations, and so on forever and ever!"

"Unless it were all for the last generation," said Henry.

"But that will never come," I answered, "or, if it does, it will surely not be worth while. I believe that whoever lives the best life for himself, and does the thing he is most impelled to do, for his whole big self, is also best for all others. He must be, since they are a part of him."

"It seems to me," said Marian, who had been dreaming, "that there is no absolute truth. When people claim that they have found the whole truth, and try to explain it to me, I never feel convinced."

"Does our idea strike you so, Marian?" I asked.

"Oh, no," she said, "not at all. You never make positive statements."

"No," I answered, "I am willing to grant that what

seems true to me now may one day be included in a larger truth."

We spoke a few words, here, of envy. They agreed at once that artistic envy, the envying of capabilities and talents, was impossible to one who felt that others were doing things for him, that what he lacked in himself he would find in others, for his satisfaction.

"But," said Florence, "there are so many other kinds of envy, where other people having the thing does you no good."

"That's true," I said; "a beggar, for instance, envying the rich people in a restaurant for their food, will not lose his hunger through seeing them eat."

I told them of the danger and difficulty of our philosophy of right and wrong, how I hesitated to tell it to them for fear they might misuse it, and how much harder it was to guide one's self by so big a standard than by an unbeautiful, ready-made morality of little laws and precepts. He must take the straight and narrow path, who cannot guide himself across the prairies by the path of stars and planets.

Virginia insisted on my repeating some facts I had told her lately. A young French girl of good education, made desperate by poverty and lack of work, slashed a picture in the Louvre, in order to be arrested, get shelter and food, and attract attention to the injustice of her lot. We discussed such cases,

and decided that where society did so great a wrong, the lesser wrong might be part of the cure.

"I cannot judge people," I said, "when circumstances drive them to do wrong in self-defence."

We came near forgiving every one, when I reminded them of the sternness of our standard. It made us lenient with others, who did not—and perhaps could not—know that they might master circumstance, and that the whole world was their whole self. But with ourselves it made us terribly exacting.

"Some people are like animals," said Virginia. "I can't understand them, and cannot sympathize with them."

"That," I said, "is your loss, you superior animal. Ruskin says somewhere, and quite truly, that who cannot sympathize with the lower cannot sympathize with the higher."

Now Virginia plunged off into a stream of delightful nonsense, told us how she sometimes loved and sometimes hated herself, how, if she was very happy, she had to pay the penalty of reaction, and how interesting she was, altogether. As a punishment we made her keep still for five minutes by the watch. I hoped Alfred would talk instead. Suppose we punished him by making him talk for five minutes!

Florence said: "What I like most of all is to be liked. I often envy people their lovableness."

"Naturally," said I, "that is what we all like most, isn't it?

"And the truly good person, in our sense of good, is also the lovable, beloved person."

Marian and Virginia exchanged glances. They were thinking again of that girl in Sunday-school, who, they said, was thoroughly good, but not at all lovable.

"The good person," I said, "is also the intelligent, sympathetic person. Sympathy, understanding love, is the great virtue. I have made a list of seven virtues. Would you like to hear them? First, Love."

That, they said, included all the others.

Yes, I answered, it was the chief. Second, Courage. Courage, they said, to do as we believed. Third, Trustworthiness. They all agreed. Fourth, love of knowledge. Fifth, love of beauty. Sixth, insight. Seventh, a sense of humor!

During this time Virginia and Marian were fitting each virtue to that girl, and found her lacking only in the latter ones, but no more lovable or interesting than before.

"Ruth," I said.

"Yes."

"Are you sure they are not speaking of you or me?"

"I don't know," she answered; "perhaps."

They protested.

"Do you know the girl, Ruth?" I asked.

"Yes, I do."

"Well," I said, "please bring her to the next meeting. She interests me."

Ruth promised, despite the protestations and explanations of Marian and Virginia. "You would know, then, of whom we had been talking," they said.

"Very well," I answered, "she shall stay away on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you don't mention her again. I always feel," I went on, "that when any one is badly spoken of, I am being criticized behind my back. Just as when a race, such as the negroes, for instance, is unjustly spoken of, I feel like fighting for my rights; for I take it as a mere matter of chance that I didn't happen to be one of them.

"Florence," I continued, "is quite right in wanting to be loved. It is the best thing in the world."

"Except loving," said Virginia.

"Of course," I answered; "but to want to be loved by those we love for what we really are, and truly to wish to be what they can truly love, that is the whole of goodness, I believe. The only difference between vanity and true worth is that the vain person wishes to appear to be what is lovable—which is very unsafe—and the truly good person wishes to be it."

"You mean," said Henry, "that vanity is company manners?"

"Yes."

"I don't know," Florence said. "I have liked people who used 'company manners' for some company, and not for others."

"I have known people," said Marian, "who were always agreeable and sweet, and appeared to want every one to like them, and yet were not a bit lovable."

"Naturally," I said, "the person who wishes to be loved for what he is, is also willing to be hated for it, if he must, by those who think otherwise." I said there was a man of whom we had heard much during the last days (because of his centenary) who seemed to be exactly what we meant by good. This was Abraham Lincoln. We spent some time speaking of him, the man who, it seems to me, might have inspired a new American religion.

"We always sympathize most with those," said Henry, "who sympathize with us."

"We love them most," I said, "but the man of large heart will often sympathize with people who understand him no better than they understand the sunshine: with the bad man, for instance."

"That is true."

"In the drama of life," I said, "he who loves beauty and his whole self will live so as to make that whole beautiful, and for this joy and beauty will gladly give up his petty satisfactions. For remember that the good life is the beautiful life, and the inflential life. Indeed, every life in this drama has immense influence."

"For good or bad," said Henry.

"Yes, surely."

"I thought not," answered Florence; "each one has a very, very small influence."

"In the universe, perhaps, but we know nothing, and can know nothing, of that. We cannot make comparisons with infinity. But with those we love, who know us, in our own family, our own circle of friends, the influence of each one is immense. Think of any family you know, of your own family, and see how much difference each one makes in the whole, how each one changes the whole. Each one influences all the others, and makes the tone and color of life, whether he will or not."

"I suppose," said Henry, "that even those who have no influence, who do nothing, could have an influence."

"They can't help having it, for good or bad. And people can know they have this influence, and use it consciously, to make life about them as they wish it to be. As a woman who comes into a house, if she loves beauty and order, will set it in order at once and make it beautiful, so that it will be all changed because of her, and for her pleasure, so in life we can set all things in order and change them to our wish, by our presence and character."

"I don't think," Ruth said, "that the good is always beautiful. Often the thing we have to do is disagreeable."

"For instance, what?" I asked.

"In school work, for example. We have to study

subjects that are hard and disagreeable, simply to pass."

"You mean that you have to do disagreeable things to get what you want. Naturally. That is self-sacrifice. And you cannot always do things as you would like to do them. The woman in the house might find ugly wallpaper, and not be able to change that. But she would find other means of making things look better. People can have conscious influence; and the difference between those who make life good and beautiful, and those who attract attention to themselves, is the difference between the play in which all the actors are good, and combine to make a beautiful play, and the one where there is a star who wants a poor cast to set off her charms, and produces an inartistic and uneven play."

"I don't see how one could have conscious influence," said Marian; "it seems to me one lives unconsciously all the time. I like to dream. I am not fond of acting. I don't believe I would ever have any conscious influence."

"To dream and dream and keep on dreaming, and not act, is impossible," I said.

"But," asked Florence, "isn't it just the dreamers who do all the great things?"

"Surely," I answered, "one cannot help influencing people, even by one's dreams. But you, Florence, you must realize how much difference each member of a family makes."

"Yes, I do."

"And Virginia, I believe, has often made conscious effort toward cheerful influence, and knows what I mean. You, too, Ruth; I am certain you know exactly what I mean, and I hope you and Marian will talk it over; for it is an interesting subject."

"Yes, I know well what you mean."

As we left I asked Alfred to write a paper for me. "For," I said, "they will begin to think you stupid if you show no sign of intelligence. And even I would like a tangible proof of what I really know, that you do grasp exactly the spirit of what we say."

THIRTEENTH MEETING

MARIAN was absent. I read aloud Henry's paper:

"Last Sunday we met for the first time in almost two months. We had finished talking about art, and we started on a new course in which we shall apply our standard of beauty.

"Our topic last Sunday was Goodness. Good is a much-abused word. We often speak disdainfully of a person, as being a goody-goody, but susally this person, though not necessarily bad, is not good according to the standard of to-day. In the last generation, and even in some places to-day, the good child is the one which does its work conscientiously, and spends all its spare time at sewing or doing odd jobs around the house. The 'good man' does his work faithfully, never swears or lies under any circumstances, and follows his religion, as it is set down for him by others, absolutely to the letter.

"In speaking of bad, one kind we mentioned was that which was once good, but which we have left behind us in our progress. This is true of that old standard. We have said that what we want is complete sympathy. That which is beautiful is the symbol of completeness, and the good is beautiful; and therefore the man with a warm, sympathetic heart

is the good man. A splendid type of this sort of man is Abraham Lincoln, a man who suffered with the sufferer, and rejoiced with the happy; a man with charity for all and enmity toward none.

"We condemn the selfish man, but the man who does so much for others that he does nothing for himself, is to be criticized just as much. Hillel says: 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me?'

"There is really no such thing as self-sacrifice, for if you voluntarily give up one thing for another, it is because you like it better."

I said that this paper proved to me, what I had already suspected, that in the last meeting I had dwelt too much on one side of our subject, and not enough on the other.

"Perhaps," said Henry, "I spent too much time describing the man who isn't truly good?"

"No," I answered, "I don't mind that. But you say 'the man with a warm and sympathetic heart is the good man.' To be the truly good and great man, one must have more than a warm and sympathetic heart, more, even, than a feeling of kindliness and sympathy for one's fellows.

"You speak of Lincoln as a man 'with charity for all and enmity toward none.' But Lincoln was much more than that. This alone would not have made him great and splendid. What did?"

Henry said: "He was a man of determination," and, before I could answer, Alfred went on: "He was a man of large sympathies."

"Yes," I said, "it is the combination of the two; it is more than both. I mean that the great and good man is the man whose final far-off aim is the unity and completeness of man, who shapes his life and his work toward that aim, who works for it, lives for it, sacrifices himself and all things to it; and such a man was Lincoln. He made mistakes—he used them for his cause. His morality, his law, was the union—that symbol of the larger union—and for this immense self-fulfilment he worked with his might, and died for it."

"Yes," said Henry, "and the great man must make mistakes, and go beyond them. Roosevelt, for instance, is always making mistakes, and then acknowledging them, and going forward once more."

"Surely. And so Lincoln worked for the union, in sympathy with all men."

"In one speech," said Henry, "he asked Davis, his opponent in the House, to 'help him save the union.' "

"Now, Henry," I said, "there is another thing in your paper—if you don't mind my saying it?"

"Not at all."

"I mean that when you quoted Hillel you should have finished the quotation: 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me?' and 'but if I am for myself alone, what am I then?' You did not bring out the idea of the large and small self, of sacrificing the small self to the large, because you love the large self above all else, not because you like it better. This morning I heard a lecture by Professor Royce,

of Harvard, and it is curious that he used exactly the same words we used in speaking of self-sacrifice. He said we sacrifice the small to the large self."

At this point Ruth came in, and brought Marian's paper. I read it at once:

"Our meeting of the Seekers of February 14th was very interesting. We talked about goodness. First we tried to define *good,* and finally reached the conclusion that *goodness* means being in a harmonious relation with all our fellow-beings. We should try to make our life like some beautiful picture or other work of art, making it a complete and harmonious whole. All our friends and acquaintances, everything we see, hear, do or know, help to make this picture; and if we try, we can consciously make it what we want. We are masters of our lives, and if we remember this, it will influence all our thoughts and deeds. We also spoke of happiness, and decided that each one has a different kind of happiness, depending on what he wants most. We also spoke of self-sacrifice. There is really no such thing as self-sacrifice, because when we give up one thing it is always because we think another finer, and because we want the other more. We cannot have every detail in our picture as clear as the main idea, and we must give up something to bring out this idea."

We all thought this paper excellent. I told Ruth briefly what we had said before she came; and then we spoke at length of the importance of living our

belief, of working for the cause, of giving ourselves to the large self.

I said: "Every great man has always done just that, whether he was writer, philosopher, artist, statesman or scientist; he has always devoted himself to a work which aimed toward the great union."

Florence said: "You mean not like the philosophers, simply to dream of the good, but like the artist, to work it out? Didn't you say that, when we spoke of choosing the artistic life?"

"No," I answered, "not quite. The philosopher and dreamer also work for the supreme good, by showing what it is like, and pointing the way which men afterward go."

"That is what I always thought," said Florence.

"Yes," I answered, "the philosopher is the teacher of teachers. But I chose the artistic way of viewing life, because it combines the philosophic and the scientific way, the vision and the work."

Virginia now said: "But sometimes men who work for completeness, and whose motives are all good, do harm, anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"Jesus, for instance," she said. "He has done so much harm throughout the ages, which he never meant to do."

"It was not he who did the harm," I answered; "it was the people who misunderstood him and misused his words. No great man ever does all that he

sets out to do. He cannot, since his aim is no less than perfection."

"I hate perfect people," said Virginia, "or to think of any great man as perfect, because it is so inhuman. I read a book for children, lately, about Jesus, which made him out a perfect child. It was full of contradictions, for it said first that he was a wonder, who walked, talked and thought earlier than other children, and then it said that he was human, and understood all human weaknesses. I think that to know men a man must have human weaknesses and imperfections."

"Yes," I said; "and I never thought of Jesus as unhumanly perfect. He, too, had his temptation and weakness to fight and overcome. Indeed, only the petty man could be perfect."

"But he would not be perfect," said Henry.

"No," I answered; "but according to his standard, he might think himself so. The great man, the Jesus, the Lincoln, could never be perfect, for his perfection could only come with the completeness and beauty and goodness of the whole world. You said of Jesus that he did harm, because the doctrine made from his words did harm. But you must see that until all men are great men, every man must suffer so. Take Lincoln, for instance. If he had lived, and kept control of the Government, surely the evils of the reconstruction period would have been avoided. You might say, then, that Lincoln did harm, because his work led to all that wrong and unhappiness."

"But it has all come right now," said Henry.

"Hardly," I answered; "it is not nearly right, even to-day."

"And I suppose," Virginia said, "that finally the work of Jesus and of every great man will come right."

"And Lincoln's work," said Florence, "will come right sooner, because it is not so large as the work of Jesus."

Now I said I wanted to go on to a subject which seemed to me especially interesting, the question of the making of laws and regulations. Was it not a curious thing that men's minds, outrunning their other powers, should see clearly the great good for which they strove, and should make regulations for themselves, which they were even unable to keep?

Henry and Ruth did not think it at all curious that people should make regulations for themselves, but it did seem strange that they were unable to keep them.

"To me," I said, "it seems a wonderful thing that the sense of beauty and fitness should be so strong in the mind of man, should so far outrun his impulses and his body, that he creates for himself laws and regulations which he then tries to follow, as one sets up a ladder which he afterward tries to climb. Of course, we no longer believe in revelation, in the old Biblical sense, but to us it means revelation from within. We do not believe that God dictated his laws to Moses, but that Moses created his laws from

his own sense of love and beauty. Man made his own laws. And his laws outrun him."

"Some people," said Ruth, "make laws for the other people, who are not up to them."

"No," Henry said; "isn't it really all the people making laws for themselves?"

"Yes," I answered, "for finally it is the few making laws for all, for themselves, too. It is humanity making laws for humanity. Every time a man does wrong and knows he is doing wrong, he is breaking one of his self-made or self-chosen laws. His mind outruns his powers. When Coleridge wanted to break himself of the opium-eating habit, he used to hire men to stand in front of the drug-stores and prevent his going in. He tried to overcome himself with himself."

"I like Coleridge," said Virginia. "I like people with weaknesses, who try to overcome them."

I said I liked them, too, that there was no sight so stimulating as that of fights and conquests, as seeing the very thing we longed for, the opposition beaten, the difficulties overcome.

"But even the weak people who fail to win," said Virginia; "I like them, too."

"So do I," I answered; "the fight itself, even the failure, the human longing, is worth while.

"But I want you to see clearly one thing about all laws and regulations, and that is that they are substitutes. They are substitutes for understanding love, or, rather, they are the forerunners of understanding

love, the path of beauty and fitness which the mind makes for itself before all our desires are strong and harmonious enough to fulfil the supreme desire. Laws are the framework on which the house of love shall be built. But when the house is finished, the framework shall no more be seen; nor is it of value in itself, but only as that which upholds the house. I would like to talk with you of certain special laws of this kind. And the first is justice."

"I was just going to say that," said Ruth; "it was on my lips."

"I was thinking of it, too," said Henry.

"I am sorry," I answered, "that I did not give you the chance."

We talked of this subject, and agreed that although justice, the sense of equity, was a great and necessary virtue and a serviceable tool, it was but the tool of love, and less than love, and that if our understanding, our sympathy and possession of life were complete, we would no longer think of justice, nor praise it; that the rigid laws of justice, which must oftentimes change, were forever at the service of love, which made changes and overcame laws.

"Some people are not so far advanced as others," said Virginia, "and the others lift them up with laws. Some people are undeveloped, like animals."

We could not help laughing at Virginia, with her eternal animals.

"You remember," I said, "I spoke to you of past virtues that were good in their time, because the time

was ripe only for them, and that in their own setting interest and delight us, and remain forever beautiful, like old pictures, but which would now be ugly, bad and out-of-place. Revenge is an example. How the old stories of revenge stir and even uplift us, and yet how hateful is the idea of revenge in modern life! You remember being thrilled and stirred by the heroism of some old duel, whereas you could find no beauty or heroism in any duel at the present time."

"I think," said Ruth, "it is often the language in which the thing is put that stirs us."

"It is the spirit of the time and place," I said. "No language could make a duel in New York, among educated people, inspiring or heroic. With war it is the same. Old wars and wars among savages may inspire us, because of the heroism and comradeship of the fighters. But among modern nations even the justified war must be somewhat disgusting, because now far more heroism is required in other works, and comradeship can mean no less than all mankind.

"Now," said I, "can any of you think of another virtue, like justice, which is a substitute for understanding love?"

"Yes," said Florence; "I think that pity is."

"Pity?" I said. "Yes—perhaps. Still, that is somewhat different. Pity was good once, because it was feeling, and feeling is the root of all understanding and sympathy. But self-torturing pity seems

to me a weakness. Sympathy is quite a different, a stronger, a braver thing. Who agrees with me?"

First, they said, would I explain exactly what I meant?

"Sympathy seems to me understanding and love, such as you have for yourself. You are willing to suffer, since it is a part of life and a part of the way. You want to suffer for the cause, if necessary; not otherwise. But you don't pity yourself. You would be ashamed to make so much of your pain. So you do not pity others. You love them, you feel with them, you help them bravely. You can bear their pain without making a fuss over them, as you would bear your own. You consider them as strong and brave as yourself."

They all agreed with me, save Virginia. She said: "If I step by accident on the foot of a little dog, and he cries out, then that hurts me. And I think it is good, because then I know how I would feel if I were a little dog, and I try not to do it again. Isn't that pity?"

"Perhaps," I said; "we are apt to pity lower creatures. But there is no good in the mere feeling of physical pain that goes with such things, of the pain and thrill up and down your spine when you hurt any creature accidentally, and hear it cry out."

"Don't you think," asked Alfred, "it is only because they cry out that we feel it?"

"Maybe," I said, "for the cry makes us know of the pain. At one time, however, a virtue was made

of the mere suffering *with* others; and I suppose in its good time this was necessary, because it developed the feeling which makes sympathy possible."

"I think it is good," said Virginia, "for when my sister was ill, I did not know how she felt, or understood her, and so I couldn't sympathize with her; but later I understood, and then I wished I had felt with her as she did. It would have been better."

"Perhaps," I said, "for it would have taught you to feel. To know how others feel is the best thing in the world. But to let that feeling overcome and crush you, to pity them, is weakness. I think it is a weakness we have all felt, and longed to overcome, when we suffered so much with others that we were unable to act."

"Yes, indeed," said Ruth.

"To be strong to help and strong to do, not overcome with world-sorrow," I said, "to face suffering in ourselves and others as something to be overcome and used!"

Virginia spoke of a curious calmness in herself that made her not act excitedly when anything happened, but always wait first to see the outcome. "If a child falls in the street," she said, "I don't go rushing toward it as some people do, but wait to see if it will pick itself up."

"But if it fell out of a window," said Ruth, "I suppose you would rush forward."

"No," she answered, "not unless it were necessary. I would wait to see what happened. When my hat

blows off, I never go rushing after it till I see where it is going to stop."

The juxtaposition of a falling child and a falling hat was disconcerting.

"I know how Virginia feels," I said; "it is the artist in her always looking on at all that happens. It is a good way, too. Now what other virtues are there, like justice, that are really substitutes for right feeling?"

They could not think of the others. So I mentioned honesty, which is much like justice—even a form of it; steered clear of a reef of arguments on truth-telling, showed them how honesty would not even be mentioned where there was perfect love, and went on to the next and most important, namely, duty. They had not thought of it in this way before. They all disliked the word duty.

I spoke again of the girl who stays home from the theatre with some one she does not love, because she feels it to be her duty. Why does she do it?

"Because she chooses," said Alfred; "she wants to do it most."

"But why?" I asked.

"She may think," said Ruth, "that the other person would do the same for her."

"But she may not think so," I said, "and still she would stay."

"Because," said Virginia, "she would feel good afterward."

"Yes," I said, "in a sense it is that. It would give her satisfaction."

"I would do it," said Ruth, "but I don't think I would feel any particular satisfaction afterward."

"But," I said, "if you didn't do it, you would feel dissatisfied with yourself. And therein lies the explanation of duty. Duty is a substitute for love. It is the substitute the mind imposes on us when our feelings will not fulfil the scheme of beauty and order which is our strongest desire. To do your duty is to fulfil your strongest desire—lacking the great love. Love shall overcome duty. Duty means only debt. It is limited, small. It is the ugly framework that love must make before it can build its beautiful dwelling-place. The strong man always does his duty, because he flinches at nothing that is on the path, but more and more he loses duty in love."

Virginia said: "I think it is fun sometimes to hate things, such as hating to go to school."

"Why?"

"Because to do a thing you hate to do makes you feel good sometimes. I like it."

"We have come to love the hard thing," I said, "because it is the growing thing. We get to fancy that when we do something hard we must be getting ahead, because generally it is true."

Virginia said: "I like the poem by Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm:

'When joy and duty clash,
Let duty go to smash.'"

"I wish joy and duty were the same," I said, "and that is just what they are when love conquers. You have to do your duty when love fails, and so it often seems an unpleasant job."

I spoke now of promises, and of how unnecessary they would be were it not for our failures in love. Then we went on to speak of obedience. We said that where love was perfect one would not think of obedience or disobedience. Obedience is a substitute for understanding. He who understands does not obey. He acts. We spoke of necessary obedience, the substitute, and then of the family where parents and children were so much at one that obedience was never mentioned.

"A person out of such a home," said Virginia, "would not have enough to struggle against. I don't like people who are just perfect, and have nothing to overcome."

"We will never reach perfection," they said; and they all, save Henry, agreed with me that the greatest joy in life was working for, rather than achieving our desires.

"But when we reach perfection," he said, "we won't wish for it any more."

I refused to argue that problematic point.

I said: "Be sure the strong and good man will always find something still to fight and overcome."

We spoke now of how disobedience might be a virtue, of the rebels in wars for freedom, and the child who would refuse to obey his parents, if they

ordered him to do what he thought bad; the thief's child, for example.

I said: "The framework is for the house—not for itself—and if it doesn't suit the house, it must be pulled down."

Now we had an amusing talk on conventions, in which Henry objected to full-dress suits, bouillon cups and polite lies. But I showed them how good and necessary were conventions properly used, since they saved us weighty discussions on trivial matters. I said it was a good thing we didn't have to waste time and energy deciding what we would eat for breakfast each day.

"But," said Henry, "if some day I don't care to eat oatmeal for breakfast, I don't want to feel obliged."

"No," I said; "don't be a slave to convention."

I went on: "If all things were right, then conformity would be good—though uninteresting—but in this growing world we need reformers who smash and reform things, whenever conformity becomes deformity."

You notice that Alfred spoke more at this meeting. I had told him that if he did not help us along, and show what he meant and thought, he was not living up to our idea of completeness and work in unison.

FOURTEENTH MEETING

I READ Henry's paper:

"A good man will bring those with whom he comes in contact into harmonious relations with himself. It is not enough to have a good heart. Many people are always meaning to do good, but never do it. It is the actions that count; for we said: 'Art (good) is self-expression and self-fulfilment.'

"Many things which we call virtues are only substitutes for love and sympathy, which we are outgrowing. The principal ones are justice, honesty, conformity, obedience and pity.

"Men have not perfect sympathy, but often do things at the expense of others. Therefore man, realizing his weakness, has made for himself a set of laws."

I objected to his use of the word "pity" along with the other substitutes. We had another short talk on the subject.

Virginia said: "I would rather commit suicide than be pitied."

"Then," I answered, "since we do not wish to be pitied, we could not, with perfect sympathy, do so unto others."

Virginia went on: "When a person who has some

trouble or loss makes a great fuss over it, I must say I don't think very well of him."

"We expect people to bear life bravely," I said, "and to help them do it, to do it altogether. A man who is prevented from helping by his own pity is like a man who, when he saw another blind, put out his own eyes in sorrow, instead of leading the blind."

I said I wanted to speak of a subject that seemed especially to interest Virginia. I meant patriotism, but patriotism in a large and unusual sense. What were their ideas on this subject? Virginia implied that patriotism was not good, "because whenever you are patriotic for your own country, you have to be patriotic against other countries. You seem to be praising and helping your own at the expense of others."

"That," I said, "is just the trouble with the false view of patriotism, and that view has grown out of wars and conquests. For, naturally, whenever people fought for their country, they had to fight against another. But I see patriotism—and any loyalty or faithfulness—in a larger relation. Think for a moment what the word patriotism really means, in its verbal root, and you will see how it grows, how it begins at home, and ends by including the world. What does it mean?"

Henry remembered that it came from a word meaning "Father."

"Yes," I said, "it meant, originally, loyalty to our

fathers, to our family; and so you must see what it would finally mean."

"Because," asked Ruth, "we are related to the whole world?"

"Yes," I answered, "we are related to the whole world, we are children of all the nations; but most of all, of course, children of our fathers; so that, beginning at the centre, we shall spread to all sides, yet not lose the centre. The definite thing, the love for this land, this home, will come first, and include all the others. We will be patriotic for our Father, the world."

"Do you suppose," asked Marian, "that an Englishman could be patriotic for the United States?"

"Yes," I said, "and I am glad you asked that, for it gives me a chance to tell you what forms patriotism is beginning to take. An Englishman, or American, may be patriotic for Anglo-Saxonism all the world over; for the English language and literature everywhere; he may dream of it as the world-language; and then, surely, he is patriotic for these States, as well as for England. I am not going to preach patriotism to you. I know you are all patriotic for this country, for Americanism, for the idea of democracy which America upholds. Surely the schools, from first to last, dwell so much upon it that an American child can hardly help being patriotic."

I was surprised at the burst of answers.

Marian said, on the contrary, the school with its

continual, boring insistence on patriotism, almost made one hate it; that no children liked to sing the patriotic songs. Ruth objected that singing patriotic songs was not patriotism. Alfred, Marian and Ruth spoke of the boredom of patriotic holiday celebrations in school, how the well-known men got up and, as Alfred put it, "said the same thing each time." Marian said they had patriotism "thrown at them in chunks." Florence added, she thought we felt unpatriotic, because we didn't want to be like those who expressed that kind of patriotism.

We concluded, however, that after all we were patriotic in spite of the schools, and that America stood for something big, definite, wonderful. I told them that if only they had been away from it more, they would understand it better. And they all admitted that America, insulted with false criticism, would arouse them like a personal insult.

The picture, with its central, definite object, still suggests universal things. So one must begin with loyalty to first things, to family and State, before one can be loyal to the universe. I spoke of those French Socialists whose patriotism for the whole world had carried them to the point of unpatriotism to France, so that in a war they would wish to see their own country destroyed. Their loyalty to working-men the world over made them careless of the state at home.

"Only to working-men!" cried Virginia. "But

I think one need be just as loyal to the rich, and that they are quite as much in need of reform and help."

"I agree with you," I answered.

Ruth said she could understand those French Socialists very well, and to her it seemed that from their own point of view they might be right.

I answered: "From their own point of view, of course. And they do want final, universal good; but they don't see that to gain the large one must preserve the small, that the universal must begin with the particular."

"Like some philosophers," said Henry.

We discussed the subject of war—all disbelieving in it—without coming to any definite conclusion as to what we would do under any particular circumstance.

Virginia asked whether it would be wrong of a man, if his country went to war, to refuse to fight because he disbelieved in war. Henry said he thought it would be better to do as the fighting Quakers did, to fight, so that the war might soon be ended.

Ruth said if all people refused to fight, war would end. I agreed with her, but said also: "If a man disbelieves in fighting, still, when he is struck, he defends himself—that is, if he has any spirit. So I would expect a man, no matter what his convictions, to defend his country when it is threatened and attacked."

"Do you think," they asked, "that Russians can be patriotic for Russia?"

"Yes," I said, "and that is a patriotism of which

we have not yet spoken, or perhaps thought. It is the patriotism that seems unpatriotic. The Russian revolutionists are patriotic, not for the Russia of to-day, but for the Russia that will be, for the Russia they are going to build, for the nation in their hearts. Often the most patriotic man is he who criticizes his country, who fights against the present state of things, who appears disloyal because his loyalty is large. Such were the colonists, loyal to the union and independence."

I quoted that slogan at the time of the Spanish-American war: "My country, right or wrong, my country still." They were indignant at such an appeal, and agreed with me that blind loyalty was slavishness. I told a story to illustrate what I meant.

Suppose a family to be in grave debt, but careless about paying, and unwilling to make sacrifices. One member, with the family honor at heart, insists on these sacrifices and hardships for all, until the debts are paid. His brothers and sisters may accuse him of unkindness and disloyalty, but he will be the truly loyal one.

Now, I asked, what was the next law in art?

Henry brought out his paper and read: "Must leave out the unimportant."

"Yes," I said, "and the next one reads: Must have variety and many-sidedness. Do you understand at all how these apply to life?"

"You don't mean," asked Marian, "that we are

never to do anything unimportant, that we are always to be thinking about it?"

"No," I answered, "certainly not. But I mean that we are to have a definite aim in life, that we are to know what we want most of all. Then we can avoid everything which interferes with this aim. We are to choose the sort of life that will help us to be what we wish to be, that will make us whole and harmonious."

"I don't know what I want to be," said Marian. "I don't think one need have a definite conscious aim."

"You do not quite understand me, Marian," I answered. "You need not choose now what your profession will be, or what definite thing you want most. Very few people as young as you have done that."

Marian said: "Florence has."

"Florence?" I asked. "She said she loved most to be loved."

"We all do," said Henry; "to be loved, and to love others."

"I would like," said Florence, "to dance as well as my dancing teacher."

I expressed grave doubts as to the permanence of this ambition.

"But," I said, "what I mean, Marian, is that you want to be a certain kind of person, that you must have an idea of yourself which, even unconsciously, you try to attain; and it is this ideal, this vision of the self you wish to be, and mean to be, that should

color and shape your life, as an artist's idea of his central figure and meaning controls his whole execution."

"I'm sure I don't think of it all the time," she said; "I like just to live along, and dream, and be what I happen to be."

"Now, Marian," I answered, "you are saying what you think is true. But I will show you that it is not. You live for your desired self, even unconsciously. Do you not remember doing or leaving undone certain little things which your ideal of yourself wanted otherwise, and then reproaching yourself for days for this small lapse into selfishness or unkindness?"

They had all had this annoying experience, as well as I myself. Marian told how, when she was quite a small girl, something had happened that she had never forgotten. A little beggar-girl, with only rubbers over her stockings, came to the door and asked Marian for old clothes. Marian had been reading stories, and was longing to act them. But her mother was out, and she had not the courage to do anything; so she turned the child away with a mumbled excuse about her mother's not being at home. And she had never forgiven herself.

Marian saw that what I meant by a definite aim in life was, after all, indefinite enough to suit her.

Virginia said: "When I want to do some kind or good thing which it is hard to do, because I lack courage, I make up my mind that I will do it any-

way, without thinking; I walk right in, and then the rest is always easy and pleasant."

"In other words," I answered, "you manage yourself. I do believe it is good to know what you want to be, and how you want to be it, and then to avoid strenuously everything that interferes."

We spoke of wasted and worthless conversation with "outsiders," and I warned them all against boring people, or allowing themselves to be bored. It is better not to talk at all. Virginia said she always made people amuse her, which seemed to us a good way. I suggested getting people to tell of themselves, since all human nature is interesting. But Ruth objected that people who did it were the worst bores, and only conceited people *would* do it.

"At any rate," I said, "please don't get into the habit of making flat conversation, for then you yourselves will degenerate into bores." And we decided that merriment would cover many ills.

We spoke of the worth of knowledge. The boys and girls have to study subjects unprofitable to them, for the sake of passing certain examinations. This, of course, is a definite sacrifice for a definite reason. But it is necessary, in all studying, to choose some subjects and to sacrifice others. I said I would very much like to know everything.

"Yes," Henry answered, "I always wish I might know everything there is to know."

"But, of course, we can't," I said, "and so we have

to choose first that knowledge which we need, which will make our life as we wish it to be."

Alfred told us how he had chosen to study French and German instead of Latin, because they seemed more necessary to him, though he would like to know them all.

"And," I said, "the thing you love you shall seek with your might. You must definitely want to be a certain sort of a person in life, else you may be no sort of person. Have you noticed how some people, who were quite charming in youth, 'peter out' when they grow older, how they lose all interest in things, and become dull? To me that seems unnecessary. Age may be just as full, interesting and active as youth, to those whose life has a definite aim and meaning."

Henry said: "Yes, I wish to live long. I have heard people say they would not like to be old, and to be a burden to others."

"But you," I answered, "mean to live long and not be a burden to others."

"Yes," he said.

"You must concentrate," I went on; "you must get out of life only what you need and want."

Florence said she couldn't concentrate in her studies, except when she loved them. Naturally, I answered, it was strong love that made us concentrate.

Virginia said: "I used to study, only instead of studying I looked out of the window."

"But now, at your art," I answered, "you work with concentration, because you love it."

Henry remarked that perhaps, when she was looking out of the window, she studied the landscapes.

At this point Marian, hearing voices in the next room, whispered to Ruth whether she knew who was there.

"Strange," I said. "Until you spoke of it, I did not notice any voices. Do you love this club? Well, I do, too; and when I am here, no matter what happened before, or will happen afterward, or may be happening now, I think of nothing but what we are doing, I forget everything else. Do you remember the difference between the painting and the photograph? The photographic plate takes every detail, unimportant and meaningless; the picture contains only that which makes it complete and beautiful. Let your life be a picture, not a photograph. Do not let your life be a sensitive plate that cannot defend itself against any impression. Let it be an artist's work, chosen, complete, beautiful. Leave out what does not concern you.

"Now, what is it," I asked, "which all of us do love best, and which includes all our lesser loves?"

Henry answered: "You mean complete sympathy and understanding."

"Yes," I went on, "and all our lives are different, definite expressions of that desire."

We spoke a few words of those people who mistake the means for the end, who make an end of

business, athletics, or even study, so that they forget these are only a means to the end, and destroy or waste their own powers in some pettiness.

"Each life," I said, "must be a different, definite expression of the longing for unity."

"Definite?" asked Marian again. "If I were always to be thinking what sort of person I meant to be, I would be dreadfully self-conscious."

"No," I said, "you would not think it, you would live it. Desire is a habit. Self-consciousness of the stilted sort attempts to realize what sort of person you appear or are, and then to act your part. Then you usually fail, and you are usually wrong in your estimate. But know what you long to be; and then be it, because of your strong desire. It is not necessary to have chosen your life-work now, but you will choose it some day, and meanwhile you want to be ready and open for it. You and Alfred have not yet chosen, nor need choose. But the others believe they have chosen. And there is no reason why each one should not do just what he sets out to do. Each life and each moment of each life is tremendously important. Each man is as great as he loves to be. The difference between the great genius and the common, scattered man, is the difference in desire. Great desire makes great deeds. It is not so much capacity, so called, as the desire, the concentration and the belief that you can."

"Self-confidence," they said.

"Yes, surely. When a man has his call, when he

feels that he must do a thing, then he can. Did you ever think of the word 'calling,' what a tremendous thing it means?"

"Vocation," said Ruth.

"Yes," I said, "your vocation. Some of us have our call early, and some late, but we can always follow it to the end with love and courage. I believe that each one of you is going to do great things. I want you to believe that you are going to be great, for then you will."

Henry said: "I mean to be a great man. I know I can, if I work for it. When some one found fault with me for criticizing Lincoln, because I was nobody, I answered that I meant to be greater than Lincoln. And I do."

"And you shall. And I believe that Virginia will be as great an artist as she means to be. And I believe that if Florence persists, she shall dance better than Isadora Duncan, and make of dancing a great and noble art."

"It *is* so," said Marian and Ruth. "It is an expression of the highest art."

"Surely it is," I said. "And I believe that Ruth will reform the whole kindergarten system, and give us new and finer ideas on education."

"I will," said Ruth.

"I believe it and know it, too," said Marian; "she had her call early. She has always been teaching little children."

"Ambition is good," I said; "it is best. He who

desires great things will do greatly. Genius is desire. And great genius is most desire.

"Each one," I said, "will then be a person with a meaning, but for all that a large, many-sided person. Do you understand, Marian? In a picture there is light and shade, and contrast makes completeness. So in life, rest and work and play, merriment and seriousness, study and exercise, and all the many different things that make up life are needed to make it whole. I believe in concentration, in variety."

"What do you mean," asked Florence, "by concentration in variety?"

"I mean," I said, "that we will make every activity in life the sort we need, that our pleasures will suit our studies. Our taste and liking in every kind of thing will harmonize. We will like only good nonsense. Even our recreation must have a certain character, and satisfy our taste. Each person stands for a definite vision of life."

Virginia said: "At the academy show last year, you remember that picture by Pischoto of an Italian garden, with a fountain? It was calm, the water poured down softly, all was still. At the Spanish exhibition, I saw a picture by Sorolla of the same spot; but it was jubilant, the water leaped, the sun sparkled, everything was gay. It was the difference in temperament that made the same spot unlike."

"Yes," I said; "I am glad you told us that. For I believe each person must be a rhythm in life, must

stand for himself, and be a force and a measure of life to those about him."

We spoke a few words more, to make this clear; and then I read to them two slips from the Ruskin calendar, which Ruth had brought:

"All that is highest in Art, all that is creative and imaginative is formed and created by every artist for himself, and cannot be repeated or imitated by others."

"Remember that it is of the very highest importance that you should know what you are, and determine to be the best that you may be."

Next meeting will be Ruth's meeting on Christian Science.

FIFTEENTH MEETING

We had our meeting on Christian Science.

I wish to record it in so far only as it related to our planned work, as I think neither Ruth's exposition nor our answers were original or enlightening.

I had given her a list of topics. The first was the idea of God. In this we found we agreed, and it gave occasion for much reviewing. Ruth had translated all her ideas from the vocabulary of Christian Science to that of our club, and this helped her to shape her thoughts. We spoke at some length of the personal and universal self. They called it "two selves," and I answered them that it was only one, the one including the other.

With the subject and matter and spirit we had some trouble. They all understood what I said, but failed —I, too—to understand Ruth; and we are not sure now whether she and I agree.

Marian said: "Scientists speak of 'dead matter,' of all matter as dead. Is that so?"

I repeated my ideas on spirit and matter—all form is an expression of spirit—and also insisted on the limitations of our knowledge. I said: "Matter seems never to be dead, because when one force takes

leave of it, another comes into possession, and decay is always the beginning of new life."

Marian answered: "You mean the particles in this table are held together by a force?"

"Surely."

"What is it? Does it feel?"

Again I pleaded ignorance.

We spoke of form as the eternal changing expression of spirit, of time as merely the measure and rhythm of progress or change. So Ruth found me willing to grant that all bad was a condition, not an unalterable thing, and that time was only a convention.

Concerning immortality Ruth believed all I do, and more besides. Alfred now agrees with me. He, too, feels that in some way he must continue to be.

Of the individual—or soul—Ruth thought as I. We also agreed on moral good and bad, and on the use and manner of prayer.

Marian asked me: "Why, if mind force forms body, can we not make our bodies perfect at once?"

I answered her that mind force had formed our bodies in the past, as they were now, and that our present, mental force was making future physical conditions; that all things went slowly, and the results of the past were inevitable. I spoke of the influence mind and action had on the body, on circulation, for instance. I said again that physical perfection could not be the aim, but only one of the conditions of progress.

On the subject of disease and cure Ruth and I disagreed entirely. But this we both held to be not tremendously important. I do not care here to record the arguments—not in the least bitter or heated—which we gladly left in air. None of us was in the least convinced by Ruth, and we were frank—she, as well as we—in our expressions of opinion.

So we found Ruth was with us in all that mattered, and had been candidly with us all the while. The children said the club had not changed their views, but enlarged and ordered them.

I read aloud the Christian Science prayer Ruth had brought some weeks ago:

MY PRAYER

"To be ever conscious of my unity with God, to listen for his voice, and hear no other call. To separate all error from my thought of man, and see him only as my father's image, to show him reverence and share with him my holiest treasures.

"To keep my mental home a sacred place, golden with gratitude, redolent with love, white with purity, cleansed from the flesh.

"To send no thought into the world that will not bless, or cheer, or purify, or heal.

"To have no aim but to make earth a fairer, holier place, and to rise each day into a higher sense of Life and Love."

We liked all of it, save the words "cleansed from

the flesh." Ruth explained that this meant cleansed from the idea of evil in the flesh.

"Then," I answered, "the author should have said, though it is less poetical, 'cleansed from the prejudice against the flesh.' I would agree with that."

Virginia again suggested the subject of animal consciousness, by telling Mark Twain's story of the cat and the Christian Scientist. Ruth said that just now she was studying this subject.

Florence asked: "Do you believe jelly-fish are conscious?"

I reminded them of Cope's theory of consciousness and desire as the cause of life, and of the higher consciousness swamping the lower. They remembered it, and were interested. Virginia said: "It is like the stars, which are always there, but cannot be seen when the sun shines."

"Yes," I answered, "the light of our larger consciousness hides those lesser feelings."

We spoke of other religions and creeds, and Henry used the term—referring to Unitarianism—"a mild form of Christianity."

Marian asked me whether mine was an absolute belief in an absolute truth.

"Because," she said, "I don't believe any one can find the absolute truth."

"You must see," I answered, "that I believe in a growing truth. Why else had we called ourselves

Seekers? And I believe we will be seekers all our lives. All I have given you is a direction."

"I am not sure," answered she, "that I want just one direction."

"He who would go in all directions at once, must stand still," I replied.

"Perhaps I must," she said. "I believe only one thing absolutely, and that is that I am immortal. And I don't think I believe that just because I like to." Still, when I questioned her on the whole self, and progress toward sympathy as the good, she fully agreed. She is afraid of accepting too much. This is a large truth, different from each one, able to include all, growing, forever changing, and forever the same, like life itself. I said: "We will always be Seekers together."

I now read Henry's paper:

"We spent a few minutes in speaking of Patriotism. Patriotism is loyalty to our fathers, and from this it comes to be loyalty toward our country, and then to the whole world. No one should be patriotic to the extent of 'My country right or wrong,' nor should any one be so patriotic in the cause of humanity as a whole as to forget his duty to his country and his home. The patriotic man is not always the right man, but the man with 'Firmness in the right as God gives him to see right.'

"Many people spoil their lives, and even those of others, by putting unimportant things on a level, or perhaps higher than the really important ques-

tions of their life. There are women who try to teach or do settlement work because they think it a duty, even though they have no taste or ability in those lines, and their right place is in their own homes. The farmer who comes to the city and tries to be a business man, will not, as a rule, succeed. Every man has some work at which he is best, and he should find out what his calling is, and then give his best efforts to that.

"To represent light in a picture, we must have shadows, and without variation life would be dull. Hobbies are very good; and if a business man delights in visiting picture galleries, or baseball games, he will be better off if he gratifies these hobbies."

Henry's paper aroused some comment. They criticized Henry for saying one should not be "so patriotic in the cause of humanity as a whole as to forget his duty to his country." They said patriotism for humanity must be patriotism for one's own land. We agreed that his error was one of words rather than of meaning.

The girls teased him about his opinion on woman's whole duty, and accused him, truly, it seems, of being opposed to woman's suffrage. I said I wished it were not out of our present plan to argue all those questions, but we would not discuss definite social or political problems at all, since the girls and boys had neither the experience nor the judgment to profit by them now.

"Do you mean," asked Marian, "whether the very

rich man ought to keep his money, or throw it out on the street to everybody?"

"Yes—if you wish to put it that way."

"I am certain," said Florence, "no one could change my views on social questions."

"No," I answered, "probably not. But no doubt you will often change them for yourself."

"Very likely," she said.

I now read Marian's paper:

"Our discussion last week at the club was on various subjects. The first was patriotism. We should be patriotic for our own country and the whole world. If we are rightly patriotic for our own country, we will be so for the whole world. It is not patriotism to say I am for the whole world, but not for my own country. This would be very inconsistent. Patriotism does not consist of saying your own country is always right, and that another is wrong because it is not your own. We also discussed the question of choosing professions, and agreed that we should always choose what we like, whether it is conventional or not. It is better to be a good dancer than a poor teacher. In doing work for others, we ought not to choose settlement work because our friends are doing it, or because we or some one else thinks we ought to. If it is work that appeals to us, we should do it; but, if not, we might go among the young people of our own circle, and help them. Another thing we spoke of was *boring* and *being bored*. Never bore any one or allow them to bore you. If you don't

know anything to say worth while saying, keep still. If some one else bores you, look at them from some standpoint such that, if they don't interest you, at least they make you laugh at them. If possible, don't frequent the society of people that bore you."

They asked, had I not said it was wrong to laugh "at" people. Yes, I answered, malicious laughter was bad, as malicious criticism was bad, but there was a kindly laughter, that laughed with people, and smiled at their superficial weaknesses in a loving way openly, as we smile at our own. In this way we often laughed at, and with, the people we loved most. But, I said, let us never forget or disrespect the self, the growing, wonderful self in every creature, especially in every human being.

Now Virginia and Marian have their troubles. They do dislike certain people, and they like talking about them. Virginia said a fool was a fool, and continued to be a fool, even if you thought of him as a developing self. Marian objected that though she agreed with me, she couldn't live up to it.

I said: "I am not going to tell you what to do, or preach you a sermon. Only I want you to see the thing in a true light. I find it impossible to sympathize with some people, and I cannot help disliking those who have done harm to any one I love. But I look upon it as a weakness and limitation of myself, which I mean to overcome. Remember that every self you fail to understand is a limitation of yourself. Every judgment you make of another is

a judgment of yourself. I wish one could say, not: 'I hate that person,' but 'I am *one who hates* that person'; the hate being a quality of your own, and reflecting only upon yourself."

"I have said of people," said Virginia, "that I did not see how they could have any friends."

"But they did have friends," I answered, "and the limitation was in your power of seeing. When you speak ill of a person, you are defining yourself."

"It would be much pleasanter," said Virginia, "to think it was a definition of the other person."

"No doubt," I answered; "do as you please, but remember what you are doing. Realize your limitation as such, at least."

Marian said: "I would like to be able to think of myself as perfect."

"At once, Marian, dear? Then make a little set of rules for yourself, and follow them, like the petty moralists, and be perfect. But we, of the growing truth, cannot reach perfection. At least, we want to know what is good, and strive for it. I can tell you more than I can do, because I see ahead. Let us remember that with our judgments and sympathies we are measuring ourselves."

SIXTEENTH MEETING

I READ Henry's paper, which expressed his point of view:

"This meeting was spent in talking of Christian Science. We agree that we are seekers for a great truth and complete harmony, which we call God. We also agree in believing in immortality, though we do not know what our existence will be like after that of our present state.

"The difference seemed to lie in our idea of matter, and, as the belief in this is closely connected with the idea of cure, we did not agree on the latter subject.

"I believe that matter is the creation of spirit; and science tells us that no matter ever ceases to exist, though it may change its form. As I understand it, the Christian Scientist says that what we call matter is not permanent, and therefore does not exist at all. But when he says it is not permanent, I think he only considers it as a definite shape, such as a house or a table, and he overlooks its different forms.

"If the Christian Scientist's idea of matter were correct, his idea of cure would also be correct. I

think he says: 'There is no matter, and therefore there can be no material suffering. Consequently, all pain and sickness are spiritual conditions.' To all those who believe in matter as a real and permanent thing, this idea is impossible."

I said: "I must insist on my ignorance on this subject. Matter to me seems permanent, a something that constantly changes form, unknowable except in form; thus form always seems to me the expression of an idea, that is, of the spirit. I know matter only through spirit or consciousness." They all agreed.

Now, I said, we would go on to the next law in art, and see what its application might be. Did they like, I asked, to take up each law of art in turn, and see what was its relation to life?

"Yes," Henry said, "and doing so makes the laws in art much clearer to me. When you tell me their application to life, it helps me to understand their meaning in pictures."

"That," said I, "depends upon your temperament. Another might find just the opposite to be true, that knowledge of the laws of art made them clearer in life."

"Yes," said Virginia, "I do."

"The next law," I said, "is: 'Art must not be partisan.'"

"It seems to me," said Marian, "the application of that to life is quite clear already."

"Why, how would you explain it?"

Evidently one must take sides in life. How, then,

not be partisan? Virginia said: "Everything has two sides."

"Yes," I answered, "and the question is how to use them both, how to be for, and yet not against. Every work of art is for something; it stands for beauty, order, completeness. But it is against nothing. The moment it stands against something, it is not art. Lincoln's life shows so well what I mean. I wonder whether you will understand how?"

But they did not. Henry said it was because he stood for the Union, but not against slavery, and looked upon emancipation as only a side issue, to be used for the sake of the Union. The others said still more uncomprehending things, and so forced me to tell them what I meant. I said Lincoln stood for a cause, for an idea, and not against any man. He wanted to win all to his side, to make his side the whole, the Union. Be for a cause, for a purpose, mean something, and strive for its fulfilment; but do not be against persons, against parties. After all, men can be won only if you are also for them, as Lincoln was also for the Southerners. He was willing to work with his political enemies for the Union, since he felt no enmity to men.

"No," said Henry, "for his Secretary of State, Stanley, was his political enemy."

The Red Cross nurses are not less at one with the purpose of their country, though they nurse and tend with equal kindness the wounded foe.

"Then," Virginia went on, "Dickens is not a great

artist in those parts of his books where he becomes bitter, and hates the characters of whom he writes?"

"No," I answered, "surely not."

"One feels that writer to be much greater," she said, "who sympathizes with and understands and loves even his worst characters. And I think Dickens has not a good influence in those books where he arouses hatred of people, and does not help the feeling of sympathy."

We spoke of political reforms—they are quite unformed and uninstructed in social thought—and then went on to school factions. Was it not true that they admired most the boy or girl who worked for a cause, without bitterness against any person? They spoke of class presidents and school parties, and discussed the thing among themselves. Ruth said that the best class president was always the one who had most enemies, for some girls liking her so much, many others were sure to dislike her.

I answered: "The person who stands for a purpose will have many against him, and he will not care. But he will not be against them. And in the end he will win, as Lincoln has won the Southerners. They may still be bitter against the North, but they join the Northerners in honoring Lincoln, the man, for they know he worked for them.

"You may have noticed that so far we have spoken of self-development and personal growth; and to you, at present, that is the most important thing. But I want to speak a few words of sympathy with

those we do not know, of our relations with the world of all men." I said they had too little experience to form definite ideas on that tremendous, complicated thing called society. I wanted to give them only a few of my ideas that might come back to them later, when they understood more.

I said: "I want you to think of society as a big self, as the rest of yourself, as one vast whole, in which each man in so many mysterious ways affects each other man, that none can be right until all are right. Have you ever thought of the relations of people with other people whom they never know, of all the things that are done for us by strangers?"

"Yes," said Florence, "I have thought of it, for we once spoke of it in another class."

"Consider it," I went on, "this table at which we sit, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, everything, everything that we use, is made for us by so many hands, all related to us and all affected by our need and use of them. Have you ever thought what the word Democracy means?"

Yes, they answered, they knew. Henry said it meant all people should have their rights. I said it meant even more. Did they remember the three old catchwords of Democracy: Equality, Fraternity——

"And Liberty," said Ruth.

"Yes, and Liberty. But I do not believe that all people are equal."

"No," said Virginia, "I am quite sure they are not."

I went on: "Democracy stands for this, that they all have the right to be equal. We must grant this, not for any altruistic reason, but because we need and want them all, because we want to miss nothing. We want each one to have the right and the chance to develop to be the best he may be, because that, too, will be best for us. And we feel that every living being is capable of immense development. For there is one thing in us all that is equal; whether it be big or little, it is the same in us all, and that is self. I feel reverence and wonder for self. Every baby seems marvellous to me for this reason; he is a new self. And whenever I stop to think, when I am with strangers, and with people, no matter how uninteresting, I have the strong feeling of kinship and mystery. Do you ever feel so?"

"Sometimes," said Virginia. "I feel that way in snatches."

"I never think about it," said Marian, "but sometimes the feeling comes."

Florence said: "I feel that way with things more than with people."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, for instance, with the ocean or mountains."

"But," I said, "there you cannot *know*. With people it is so real and close."

The trouble is, they cannot feel so with those they

dislike or wish to criticize; and this subject comes up again and again, with amusing variations.

Virginia takes dislikes to faces; Florence cannot "stand" some people whom she greatly admires; Marian will not be deprived of the pleasure of "knocking" one particular girl. From what I gather, their gossip is not of the malicious sort, and this over-criticism and sensitiveness is, as I told them, a weakness and limitation of youth. They have not yet learned to use the good of people for their own good. For people in the street, however, they often have intense sympathy; and kindness for the stranger. Marian spoke again of the apartment houses behind her school, with their hundreds of windows.

"You would like to tear their walls away, wouldn't you," asked Ruth, "to see what is going on?"

"I don't know," said Marian, "but I can't help thinking of all those different lives in there."

Virginia said whenever her mother saw strangers who looked as if they liked her, she spoke to them.

"That," I answered, "can seldom be done, except with children; because, you see, the world is not as we wish it, though it might be better were it so; and since the other person may not understand, we dare not try to understand him. Often on a sunny, happy morning, when I get into a car, I feel like greeting the motorman, and every person I meet. But how can I? They would misunderstand."

"Perhaps," said Virginia, "that is the motive of

the fresh young men who sometimes try to speak to you on the street."

"There's just the trouble," I answered, "that it isn't their motive, and so it cannot be ours."

Ruth told us how at the Christian Science church that morning she had left something undone which she regretted. She said: "There was a young man who did not seem to know any one, and he looked lonesome and uncomfortable. I felt as if I ought to go up to him and make him welcome, but I had not the courage."

"And I think you were right," I answered her, "for he might not have understood your motive. And yet again he might. It is hard to tell. I am sorry to say we have often to wrong people in this matter."

I spoke of the sufferings and the wrongs of society, and of how we must realize that these are our sufferings and our wrongs.

"Yes," said Marian, "but what can we do? We can't do anything."

"There is very little we can do, except to be on the right side, and therefore ready to do. I want to have you see the thing as it is, to be conscious of the whole, as your whole self, so that you will act according to that knowledge."

"Don't you think," asked Marian, "that a great many people act the same way, without knowing why they do it?"

"Yes," I answered, "or else they are only half conscious, or think they have some other motive. But

I believe in being fully conscious, and doing things with freedom and from conviction."

"I don't believe," said Marian, "that while I act I think of why I am acting."

"No," I answered, "I am quite certain that you do not, and that you never will. No man thinks while he acts. The thinking is done long before. And then the action comes of itself. If you always think and feel a certain way, the good, true way, you need not trouble over your actions. They will be right. Do you suppose the man who gives up his life to save another thinks of what he is doing, and why? He is doing what he must. But all his life long he has been thinking in such a way, and living in such a way, that no other action would be possible."

I said again the quotation from St. Augustine: " 'Love God, and do as you please,' for if you love the good, wholly, you can do only the good.

"Remember," I said, "that if the contagiously sick are not cared for, we shall all be ill; and, just so, starvation, poverty, sin, hurt each one of us, wherever they be, and must be cured for our own sake. Let us get over the self-righteous, sentimentally virtuous feeling which I fear charity has given many people. For that reason I have always disliked the word 'charity.' "

"Yes," said Ruth, "so have I."

"But the virtuous feeling is very pleasant," Virginia said.

"Hardly," I answered, "so sane and sound as the pleasant feeling of helping ourselves, all together."

"The word 'charity,' " said Marian, "comes from a Greek word meaning gratitude, the word 'charis.' "

"I had always thought of it," I said, "as coming from the Latin 'carus,' meaning love. But that is interesting. For gratitude is always a debt paid. And so, I fear, all our charity is a debt partly and never wholly paid. The most that a man can give, being able to give, still leaves him more than his share. And that is why I seldom have the joy untainted, of which Virginia speaks."

Virginia said it made her glad to see people happy because of her. She said: "Once three of us gave a little boy a ten-cent plaything, and it made him so happy we felt as though we had done something fine."

Ruth agreed with me that it was impossible to overcome a feeling of personal guilt at the sight of misery.

"You see," I went on, "that for the rich poverty is as bad as for the poor. Drunkenness and misery ask their price of the rich man."

"Yes," said Virginia, "for to see poor and drunken people bothers the rich man."

"She is quite right," I said; "poverty does and must bother the rich man, and that is just why he must get rid of it. Wells, the socialist, once said he dared not let any man be sick or poor or miserable, and bring up sick, poor, miserable children, for he

could not tell what man's grandchild would one day marry his grandchild."

"That is an interesting way of looking at it," said Marian. "I never thought of that."

"So you see," I went on, "we can no more praise ourselves for helping to better the world than we can praise people—except for their good sense and wisdom—when they put up hospitals for contagious diseases, and separate those who suffer from them. Did you ever think of it, that to take care of the weak strengthens the strong? The man who cares for two gets the strength of two."

Florence asked: "What if there were no weak?" A good question, but an unanswerable one, from lack of experience.

"It is good," I went on, "to use our powers, to strengthen them; and we can use them only through others. I have heard people say it is foolish for the strong to spend themselves on the weak. To me that seems untrue."

"Yes," said Virginia, "what is their strength for, if not to use it!"

"Sparta," I said, "has left no trace but her history, because she cared only for physical strength, and wasted the strength and power that are in weakness."

"I wish she had not left her history," they said, thinking of the hard names.

"Everything leaves history," sighed Marian.

"We can use all men," I went on, "and every man does something for us that we cannot do for our-

selves. The world is like a vast body, in which hand and head do each its part; and the head shall not despise the hand."

"I don't like to think of it in that way," said Ruth, "to think of different people as different parts of the body, for some would have to be way down at the foot."

"Oh, Ruth," I answered, "I believe you are despising the foot! That is because you don't think well enough of the body. But Florence knows better. She probably thinks her feet the most important part of all. When I spoke of the body, I meant that each part was equally necessary to all the others. But I suppose each one of us here would like to think of himself as a brain-cell."

"We like to flatter ourselves," said Henry.

I spoke to them of the modern trend in judging crime and meting punishment. Henry already understood this. We spoke of "homes" instead of prisons, of treating the bad as abortive and undeveloped, as moral idiots and invalids, and of using for our good and their happiness all the powers they possessed. We would hate badness, but not the bad man. How could we? Each one acts according to his desires, and in that sense selfishly; and our character depends on how large we are, how much we desire. The man who wants to be richer than his neighbor will act otherwise than the man who wants to share and enjoy the riches and happiness of all his neighbors, and make the whole world his home.

Our desires are the measure of our growth. And some are more developed than others.

"Some are so undeveloped," said Virginia, "that they seem almost like animals."

"I wondered why Virginia hadn't mentioned that sooner," said Marian.

We went on to the next law, that art must give the impression of truth. How does it apply? I said they must see that the telling of truth was not the whole of true relation.

"And there may be even a kind of truth-telling which is essentially untrue; I mean truth told maliciously, truth told for the purpose of hurting. That makes an untrue relation between people, even though it be true in fact; just as the ugly picture, truly representing an ugly thing in an ugly way, does not seem true."

Virginia said: "As if one woman said to another woman: 'I saw your husband drunk last night,' and the other woman knew it already. It would be quite true, but unnecessary."

"Exactly."

I spoke of the importance of praise and encouragement to others, and of kind, true criticism. At first they all protested that they did not like over-much praise. No, I said, not over-much, nor praise alone; I hated to be "damned with faint praise," but I loved praise and blame combined in such measure, that I felt the thing done was worth doing, and yet saw where it was wrong, and how it might be righted.

I said all teachers ought to praise and blame in this fashion—never forgetting the praise.

"They don't have time for it in school," said Ruth.

"Ruth," I answered her, "just for a teacher of small children, such encouraging critical power is most necessary."

"Yes," she said, "I know. I mean to have it."

I went on: "When I criticize a child's drawing, for instance, and find six wrong lines in it, and one right line, I will insist on the worth of that right line, and show how the other six can and ought to be made equally good. One can always point to the wrong, without hurting, when one insists on the right."

And now we passed to a difficult and engrossing subject: what things are worth while in personal social life. At this period of life it concerns the girls chiefly; but it could not be skipped for that reason. And the boys were interested listeners.

I spoke again of "prettiness" in art. Did they remember? Virginia said, those painted merely prettily who tried to please the crowd for the sake of money or applause. Yes, I answered, they tried to please those who could not understand them or truly judge them. And so there is a prettiness of manner and life which appeals to the stranger and acquaintance, but does not win the friend; the merely social prettiness, that has no true worth.

What did I mean? asked Florence.

"I mean," I said, "a mixing of values—giving up

what is worth more, for what is worth less, and, usually, because we don't realize what we are doing. For instance, ever so many will go to much greater trouble to please acquaintances than friends, and even ask their friends to 'let them off' for the sake of their acquaintances."

"That is," said Florence, "because we know our friends will forgive us."

"Yes," I answered, "and it is a poor reason, for finally we will not have any to forgive us."

"I know a girl," said Marian, "who has ever so many acquaintances, and no friends."

"When I think of society," Virginia said, "in the large sense of all people, the only class I don't think of as belonging to society, are just the society girls."

"That," I answered, "is foolish; for they do belong to it, and can be a very important part of it, if they wish."

Marian looked puzzled. "It is all right," she asked, "isn't it, for girls to go into society?"

"Surely," I answered; "not only all right, but very good, if they do it in the best way. But I think it a terrible waste for girls to do nothing but go into society, to live only for that, and rest only for that, and care only for the superficial show of it, for luxury and money-spending."

We spoke of luncheons and parties, and all sorts of festivities where decoration and show count, and tried to put decoration in its subordinate place. "People are apt," I said, "to lose the real thing in the

glamor, to care to outdo each other only in expensiveness and show, instead of remembering that pleasant surroundings are merely surroundings. Like the woman who would spend all her time on her household, and waste herself to make it beautiful, instead of remembering that its beauty could count only as a setting for herself and her greater work. It's a pity to waste good art on poor subjects."

"One must be all-sided," said Marian, "you told us so. I know a girl who did college and society and housekeeping all at once."

"And all well?" I asked.

"I think so," she answered, "though I'm not so sure about the college part."

"That is just the danger," I said, "and a danger I wish you all to avoid. I don't want one of you, when you leave school, to degenerate into a frivolous, silly society girl. You won't, will you?"

They all said they wouldn't. Virginia and Ruth were positive they couldn't.

"Because," I went on, "many girls do it who seemed serious and intelligent while at school. I will tell you why they do. They are apt to think school in itself so intellectual, that they particularly avoid, at other times, thinking seriously or reading good books or having sensible conversations. And, indeed, school does keep them thinking, but not of their own accord. So, when they are graduated, they stop all thinking, go into society, and wait to get married."

"And some women," said Marian, "get so uninteresting after they marry!"

"Yes," I answered, "it is true, and it is a pity. Naturally, every girl expects to marry, and has the right to expect it. But if she folds her hands and waits for it, or goes out and dances and waits for it, she will hardly be fit when the time comes."

"I think it is disgusting," said Marian, "for a girl to be 'on the market.' "

"So do I," I answered. "And no wonder that those girls, when they marry, become dull and 'settled,' and do not grow with their children. For, you see, they were 'finished' when they left school. I believe that when a girl leaves school she should go on working and growing and learning all her life long, whether she marry or not."

Virginia said: "I have learnt so many, many things since I left school last year."

"Of course," they answered, "at art school."

"No," she said, "I don't mean that. I learn more out of school than in it."

"The independent woman," I said, "who has some work and aim, who can support herself if need be, and who does some definite work in life, whether or not she supports herself, will not stagnate when she marries, because she has been growing all the time. When her children grow up, she will grow with them, and learn and change and think all her life."

"Must she do some definite thing?" asked Henry skeptically.

Florence said: "I know you think, Henry, that she should be good and help around the house."

"I think," I said, "that she must have a definite thing to do in life, though not necessarily to support herself by money-making. She may study, if she should wish to prepare for more difficult work, or she may have a household of people to care for, and even other people's children to bring up, just as a married woman might."

Good manners and politeness next engaged our attention.

Ruth is a great stickler for manners, especially in boys, and not a very good judge of character, so she has to make much of evident, superficial characteristics. Marian, on the other hand, is an excellent judge of character. Marian asked me whether I thought manners important, and what I thought politeness meant. I said good manners were the natural expression of kindness, but that one often met good people who were bores, nevertheless, simply out of awkwardness; that many young boys were so, and Ruth ought to teach them better. We quoted some examples of false good manners, good simply for effect, which usually were self-exposed at last. I said: "That people with kind manners are thought the best-bred and finest, is but another sign that the world of men goes in 'our' direction."

"Yes," said Marian, "I see how you mean."

Ruth granted she cared too much for good manners, since they did not always mean what they pro-

fessed to mean. To Florence they seemed unimportant, in others, as an index of character.

Florence said: "I act differently with each person, because I believe a different way will please each person."

"Yes," I answered, "we all do it unconsciously; and that is why we *are* as many people as we *know*."

She went on: "When I am with people who like to be serious, I talk seriously; and when I am with people who like to fool, why, then I am jolly and silly."

"But how about your own taste and personality?" I asked. "Does that count?"

"When I am with some very proper people," said Florence, "I love to shock them."

"Yes," I answered, "it is a temptation. But, please, Florence, make the people do what you choose sometimes. You remember that you want to be like a picture, and not only like a looking-glass."

"I like to be the controlling person," said Virginia, "and make people do what I choose."

Ruth said: "I don't believe people are ever their real self with me, and it is very annoying. They always try to seem better."

"That is," said Marian, "because they know you have such high ideals."

"Yes," Ruth went on, "I suppose *you* tell them. And then they show me only their good side."

"Ruth," I answered, "if that be true, it need not trouble you. If you can really make people always

show you their good side, you should be glad to have the power. For people's good side is a pleasanter side to see; and it is excellent practice for them to show it. I want you each to be a power and a purpose in life."

Afterward I had a little talk with Florence. I said: "I am afraid I was speaking for your benefit. Do you mind?"

"No," she answered, "but I am not going to be that sort of society girl."

I walked homeward with Virginia and Henry. Virginia told me that the club made her think, that things we said came back to her weeks and weeks afterward, and gave new meanings to life.

Next week we are going to have the last meeting. Henry asked me whether we were going to speak of "Aloofness."

"Yes," I answered, "and it will include all we have said until now."

SEVENTEENTH MEETING

I READ Henry's paper:

"We should not be partisan. Do not fight against any one as an enemy, but as a friend who tries to help another, by thwarting his wrong purpose.

"Again we can go to Lincoln for an example. When he was president, Lincoln sent to his great political enemy, Douglas, and asked for his aid in the approaching struggle. Again, when the war was almost over, and those about him said that the Southern leaders would have to be severely dealt with, he told them that though he could not avoid the hated war, now that their end had been gained, he wanted peace, and bore no malice toward his Southern countrymen, whom he would deal with as leniently as possible."

Then I read Marian's paper:

"At our last meeting of the Seekers we took up the application of the two next-to-the-last principles of Art to life. The first, 'do not be partisan,' we understood easily. But how to stand for a cause without being partisan, is more difficult to understand. By this we mean being for a cause but not against another, and being broad-minded enough to under-

stand the other side. In doing this all personal attacks are, of course, eliminated. The next principle, that art gives the impression of truth, when applied to life means being, first, truth-telling. However, if by telling the truth we unnecessarily wound a person, we had better say nothing. To tell the truth for the purpose of hurting some one is almost as bad as telling a lie."

I said I thought it was almost worse. I asked why had Henry and Marian both left out an important part of our last meeting, the part on our larger social relations? Had we not made it impressive enough? For a moment they all were puzzled. Was it at the last meeting we had spoken of that? When I reminded them of what had been said, they remembered. But Henry added: "I did not think we said it at the last meeting. It seemed longer ago. Perhaps because that is something we have spoken of at all the meetings, right along."

I said I thought all but Alfred and Ruth were not greatly interested in larger social questions. Their family and school life were more absorbing. I said: "I know Alfred is interested in social and political problems, because he has told me so. You see, even though he won't talk to you, he does sometimes talk to me."

Alfred blushed. He answered: "I care more about those outside relations than anything else."

Marian said: "I am interested, too. But last time, just in the midst, we got off to the subject of

'knocking' people. And so I don't think we quite finished."

"Perhaps," I asked, "we had better go over it again to-day? And yet I think not. You do seem to understand. I don't think you can form your social and political opinions now, and I don't care to talk much of these things. You see, the boys still have five years before they need to vote. And for the girls, I imagine it may be even longer."

"I don't know," said Ruth, "I don't think it will be much longer."

"But," I went on, "we spoke of other things, too. Didn't we speak a great deal of woman's life?"

"You mean choosing professions, and society, and so on?" asked Marian.

"Yes."

"It is strange, too," said she, "that I forgot to write about it. For it impressed me very much, and I was talking of it only the other day, when some girls were at the house."

"Now," I said, "we will speak of that strange thing, aloofness, the spectator's point of view, that a while ago you could not understand. And I think to-day you will understand at once, for it is the sum and completeness of all we have said. Do you think you know now what I mean by aloofness? What do you think, Henry?"

"I think it means," he said, "understanding with sympathy all the people about you, and the outsiders."

"Yes," I said; "but it means more than that."

Alfred looked as if he knew.

"Well, Alfred?"

"Doesn't it mean," he asked, "being able to criticize and judge yourself?"

"Yes," I said. "That is nearer; it means both, and more than both. It means being not only in yourself, but above and around, judging all things as if you were all the people, from the point of view of the whole world. You know what we mean when we say God. We mean that whole, the whole Self. It means seeing life from God's point of view. It is as if we were spectator and also actor; doing our own little part in our own little lives, and yet seeing the whole, and caring most for that whole, and acting our part in relation to it, to please the vast spectator. Have you not yourselves had that experience? Have you not, even in exciting moments, suddenly felt as if you were outside yourself, looking on at yourself, and judging?"

"Yes," said Marian, "I often do. Sometimes I laugh at myself. I see how foolish I am, but I go right on. For the actor and the spectator do not always agree."

I said: "All goodness and power in life spring from making the actor and spectator agree, making the larger self include and manage the smaller self, and move it as a player moves a pawn. For, remember, it is not two separate selves, but one self, a vast sense of all life, inclusive of this smaller self which

we control. Do you not realize that all heroism, all great and noble action is done so, in the spirit of the whole, for the vast spectator within us? When a man dies for a cause, he is that cause, he is far more than his own small self, and he gladly dies for that which includes and fulfils him. When a man gives up his life to save another man, he sees the whole thing as from above. He and the other man are one, are part of the same life, and he spends himself for himself.

"Fear," I said, "cowardice, loss of self-control in crises, always comes when the actor forgets the spectator, when the spectator loses control.

"If ever you have been in any exciting crisis, and kept cool and above fear, then you will know what I mean; how you think of the whole, of all the people, and seem to be and control the whole."

Ruth said she knew one never thought especially of one's self at such a time. Experiences, however, were scarce. Virginia spoke of the time she was with me in a burning trolley car, and how she had been interested rather than excited. But then she was a very, very little girl. Ruth said she didn't remember how she felt when she was almost run down by an automobile.

Marian asked: "One is not always conscious of the spectator?"

"No," I answered, "one is conscious of him only at rare moments. For it is the actor who acts and

lives, and the spectator controls him. The spectator is oftenest silent. He watches. And he must choose."

"But is the operator always sure?" asked Marian. "Sometimes you cannot tell what seems to you best, until you talk it over with others."

"The spectator," I said, "judges and chooses according to all he can know. Surely, he chooses in relation with others. He can use all experience; he goes even beyond his sorrow and pain. Do you understand? He goes beyond sorrow and pain, and uses them. Do you remember I spoke to you once of all things being a memory, of the body itself being a memory? The basis of all sympathy is experience and memory. So the spectator grows and uses everything. He is, as it were, in partnership with the whole, with God. And he rises on his own knowledge. The higher he goes, the farther can he see. Do you understand that aloofness, the judging from the standpoint of the whole, of the whole self, is the basis of morality? It is the part judging and living for the whole. Those who know this make the laws for all, according to their knowledge; and the others, who are only actors, whose spectator is not wide awake, have to obey."

At first they protested. Was this true? They did not understand. Henry asked did I mean making laws to control anarchists? I explained how some had to be forced to conform, even for their own good, and how the others were free, because the law

that was good for all, they knew to be best for themselves.

I said: "My own limited personal life is my weapon and means, the only weapon and means I have to come to completeness. I will always remember that it is a means, something to use; but it is my only means, and for that reason it is important and precious to me above all else."

"You mean," said Virginia, "that you don't want to dream away your life, like the ascetics of the middle ages, who dreamed of the whole, but didn't do their part?"

"Yes," I said, "exactly. It is as if we were all watching a vast chessboard, all together interested in the game, but each able to control only one pawn, and yet anxious to play in such a way as to win the game along with the others, each for the sake of the whole. And that pawn is our own life; the only power we have."

"Aren't we ourselves the pawns?" asked Marian.

"No," said Henry; "then we couldn't manage them."

"We are both pawn and player," I said; "for if we were only the pawn, in the crowd of little players, we could not see ahead, and would go blindly forward without aim. One must be above the board to see it."

And now I asked: "Shall we look once more over all we have said in these few months?"

They answered that it seemed to them this last meeting had been a review.

"Yes," I answered, "aloofness, which a while ago you could not understand, is now wholly clear to you; and more than that, it includes all we have said."

"It doesn't include it all," said Henry, "but it finishes and rounds it out."

"And our little club is finished," I asked, "artistically finished?"

"Yes," they said.

"I have noticed that sometimes some of you call it 'class.' Is it a class? Is it not rather a club; have we not all gone forward together?"

Ruth answered: "It is each or both. Sometimes we speak of it as class, or club, or lesson."

"Surely it is a lesson," said Henry, "because we have learned something from it. Whatever you learn from is a lesson."

Well, after all, I suppose I have given them my thought; and that is what I must have meant to do.

I asked them what practical result the ideas had had upon their lives.

"Do you mean in action?" asked Marian. "I never stop to think of it when I act, but I find that I refer my thoughts again and again to this standard, when I don't mean to, or expect to."

"It is a habit of thought," I answered, "and our habits of thought unconsciously make our actions."

"Yes," said Virginia, "things that happen are always bringing to mind the things we speak of here."

"But we have not yet reached an absolute, stiff conclusion, have we?" insisted Marion.

"No," I answered; "we are going to be seekers all our lives—are we not?—comrades in the search for light?"

"Surely," they said.

"And," I went on, "I want something more of you. I have noticed that you all are very shy about talking of the club to outsiders. But it seems to me that it is worth while telling your thought and your truth, that you must not only seek, but share what you find."

"You mean," said Virginia, "that we should try to get converts, like the Catholics?"

"Yes," I answered, "converts to seeking."

"It is very hard," Ruth said, "to talk to outsiders of these things. I can tell my mother. She understands. But we have made a language of our own at the club, and other people don't understand it. When I begin to tell them, they ask: 'What sort of language are you using?' "

"That is a pity," I answered, "and yet we could hardly help it. Perhaps we should have tried to use other words."

"No," said Ruth, "I think it is a very beautiful language, and we must use it. But it makes it hard to tell others."

"People don't want to understand," said Henry. "When you begin to tell them what it is about, they

make up their minds they won't understand such things. They set out with that idea."

Marian said: "I often speak of certain things we discussed, just as the other day I was speaking of women's professions and social life. But it is impossible to tell the whole idea. One would have to begin at the beginning."

"Yes," I answered, "it would be a whole course. So you have to content yourself with telling the unessential parts. But I hope that you will absorb this idea into your life and your actions, and then find new words in which to tell the same truth almost unconsciously, words that will be made clear to all through your own experience.

"We see clearly how each one of us will draw strength and judgment from his limitless whole self. And the knowledge of our greatest desire will make us teach our lesser desires to follow it, will make us shape and use the whole of our life for the thing we want and love.

"And now I wish to ask you each a question. What particular thing or power seems most dear and necessary to you in your own life, in order to fulfil your aim. Alfred, tell me. Do you know? Or do you want time to think of it?"

"What I want most," said Alfred, "is the power to calculate and judge how things are going to turn out. To plan well."

"What I want most," said Marian, "is to be the

sort of girl I wish to be. To be like my idea of myself."

"What I want most," said Virginia, "is to have fun, to be happy."

"What does that mean?" asked Henry. "Happiness, for each one of us, is having what we want most."

"Well," said Virginia, "I like life to be pleasant for me and for all the people about me."

"What I want most," said Florence, "is to be loved."

"Only to be loved, or to love, too?"

"To be loved and to love."

Ruth said: "That is what I want most, too."

Henry said: "I agree with them."

They all seemed to wish they had said it. Virginia added: "If you are happy, you are loved."

"Lately," said I, "this last week, a leader of clubs told me he had asked this same question of a club of boys. I wanted to see what you would answer."

"What did they answer?"

"They, all but one, answered 'Money.' The one said he wished to make beautiful things."

"That is a fine answer," Virginia said. "I'm sure I would like him."

"I know," said Henry, "a great many boys feel that way. I happen to know of that club. One of those boys said to me lately, what he wanted most was to have lots of money, so he could enjoy himself.

But I think after he had the money, he would not find the enjoyment satisfying."

"Of course," I answered, "money is necessary to life; that is, the means of life are necessary to life."

"But one can earn those," said they.

Marian said: "If I were as strong, capable and good as I would like, and just the sort of person I mean to be, it would be easy to earn money."

Ruth said: "If one is loved and loves many people, one is sure to find some way of getting enough money to live. I don't mean that people will thrust it on you, but you are sure to find the way to get whatever you need."

I said: "Money is only, as it were, a certificate of power; for so much work, you are given the means to go on working and living. But the great problem is to make the work itself worth more to us than the payment. And I am afraid with most people it is not so. Money is a means for work, for life, for fulfilment. If things were properly adjusted, and society perfect, each man would work for his livelihood at the work which he loved most to do."

Virginia said: "I would rather be a pauper than not be an artist."

I answered: "I hope each one of you will find the means to do the work you love, and make it your livelihood. For that is the only way to justify both work and wage."

Then I said: "Before we part and plan to meet

again, I am going to tell you something very exciting. I am almost afraid to say it."

"What is it? Tell us, quick."

"Do you remember, I told you I was keeping minutes of the club?"

"Yes, that is why you wanted our papers."

"Well, they are not ordinary minutes. They are an exact account of all we have done and said." And then I told them of this book.

They were delighted. "We are all going to be put into a book," they said.

"Yes," I answered, "it will be a book, and you are all to be in it. But who knows whether any one else will care? Perhaps it will never be published."

"Even if it isn't published," said Henry, "it will be a book."

"What will it be called?" they asked.

" 'The Seekers,' of course."

"You ought to call it 'The Pathfinder,' " said Henry. "That would sound more romantic and interesting, and attract people."

Would I dedicate it to them? they asked.

"No, certainly not," I said; "you are all helping me write it. We will dedicate it to all Seekers."

What names would I use? they asked.

I would use their right first names, I said. Weren't they willing?

Yes, yes, they were willing.

"For," I said, "one could scarcely make up prettier

names: I like them all, Marian, Ruth, Florence, Virginia, Henry and Alfred."

"Yes," answered Marian, "we like our own names."

"And you have really helped me to write it," I said, "for I have all your papers. That's why I wanted them, to prove that I was not inventing the whole thing."

"Are you putting them in just as we wrote them?" asked Marian.

"Yes, exactly."

"Oh, please," she begged, "correct my spelling and my bad construction."

"I will correct your spelling and your punctuation, but nothing else."

"Oh, please," she said, "change the places where I repeated myself. I wrote them so hastily."

"I suppose," I said, "that what was good enough for me will be good enough for any one. Don't you think so? I always wanted to write a book like this, and as I didn't have brains enough to invent it alone, I made you help me. It is a real live book. We have lived it together."

Now they asked me crowds of questions. Had I put in all the nonsense? Yes, every bit. "Then we will laugh at ourselves," said Marian. Had I put in every time Virginia mentioned animals? Yes, almost every time. It must be very interesting, they said. "Did you write down every time we laughed?"

No, I took that for granted. And did I write down when Florence said brother Arthur told her things? Yes. And would I leave that in? Certainly. And would I let them see it? Yes, as soon as possible.

APPENDIX

THE notes used by the leader at each meeting, and slightly remodeled afterward, as experience showed them to be faulty, are here presented, in the hope that they may be of use in some other club. Certain clubs have been formed by some of the original Seekers, in which the text of the book itself is being read aloud and discussed. But were an older person leading the club—and that is always to be desired—he might find it far more stimulating and fruitful to conduct the meetings by directing the conversation along the line of these notes. No doubt if he made this use of my experience, he would, by adding his own, give new value to the outcome.

NOTES

FIRST MEETING

Why Are Our Religions Unsatisfying, and What Shall We Do?

I. CONDITIONS TO-DAY:

a. Religions destroy religion. If you are wrong, I might be wrong.

b. Men cling to traditional, half-conscious belief, or build up an ethic or agnostic faith, because man must live by faith.

II. Historic Reasons for Present Conditions:

a. Initiated and popular religion in history:

1. India; castes and the Brahmans.
2. Egypt; secret priesthood, annexed beliefs, and interpretations of myths.
3. Greece; Rome; early Catholicism; the priests.

b. Analysis of initiated and popular belief:

1. Myths of Orpheus; of Moses and the Burning Bush; of the divine parentage of Jesus.
2. The initiated is the religion of poetry and prophecy, of symbols. These, taken literally by the people, become a religion of idols and prose. One is a moving spirit, the other a graven image. Words can be idols.

c. The modern trend:

1. Democratic spirit (since Reformation) destroys initiated religion, keeps popular religion.
2. Science destroys popular myths.

III. What Must We Do To-day?

a. Scientific knowledge destroys popular myths, but does not replace religion:

1. Every scientist has a philosophy or faith.

2. Science fosters new popular delusions, built on its literal facts, such as atheism and scientific superstitions of half-knowledge.

b. There is absolute religious knowledge:
   1. Its record in history: Moses, Jesus, etc.
   2. Its testimony in our own selves:
      (What do we *know?*)

c. In a democracy every one must attain this knowledge; each must be initiated; every man shall be a prophet.

IV. What Does Each One Believe Concerning God?
(Question for next week.)

SECOND MEETING

God, and the Meaning of Progress

I. The Idea of God a Personal Conviction:
   a. A realization to be achieved, but, after that, silence on the subject. Sacredness of the word.
   b. Members' individual ideas of God.
   c. My idea stated:
      1. God as Self (read from Vedas), as the completion of myself. "I am that I am."
      2. The aspiration toward complete sympathy, consciousness (selfhood) as the aspiration of God, and the aim of progress.
      3. The idea of "holiness" meaning "wholeness."

II. Historic Ideas of God:

a. The inner meaning of polytheism: many aspects of one God.

b. The inner meaning of trinity: the three as one, as the contrast of life, and its unity. A true paradox. Myself, the other Self, and love, the holy spirit.

c. The inner meaning of dualism: the two are two sides of one thing, the negative and the positive. Light makes darkness.

d. Personal, parental, and all other ideas of God are included in our larger view. The unity embraces all ideas and diversities.

III. Progress As the Trend Toward Complete Self:

a. Throughout history the only progress has been toward greater understanding and brotherhood:
   1. The value of railroads, telephones, etc.

b. The good is whatever leads toward understanding, sympathy, wholeness.

c. The bad is whatever does not lead thither:
   1. The bad is what was once good, and has been passed.
   2. Or sometimes it is the necessary result of an experimental progress.
   3. Things are not "good" and "bad," but better and worse. Therefore evil itself is proof of progress.

d. The will toward good is in the world and ourselves.

1. Dissatisfaction is the will toward progress.
2. We use all bad things for the great good that we love.

(This meeting might be divided into two, one on GOD, and one on PROGRESS.)

THIRD MEETING

Matter and Spirit

I. SHORT REVIEW:

a. What is the aim of life?

b. How do you explain good and bad?

II. ARE MATTER AND SPIRIT ANTAGONISTIC, OR LIKE GOOD AND BAD, TO BE EXPLAINED THROUGH EACH OTHER?

a. All matter has shape or idea:

1. Matter takes the shape of spirit.
2. We know only the spirit, or idea, because all things come to us through our senses.
3. Pure matter, if it exist, is a thing we cannot experience.

III. MATTER IS THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH SPIRIT EXPRESSES ITSELF:

a. Expression is the means for reaching understanding.

b. All expression, at present, is through so-called material means.

IV. Spirit Can Do All Things in the Future:
  a. "Immovable" physical conditions are the result of will or spirit in the past.
    1. Our ancestors.
    2. The mental beginnings of all physical ills.
  b. Spirit force is the only shaping force in a universe of spirit or will.
    1. One can, therefore, control the physical.
    2. One can shape one's destiny.

FOURTH MEETING

Evolution

I. The Place of Evolution in a Religious Enquiry:
  a. We must believe in that, or in special creation.
    1. Every religion has a theory of creation.
    2. Evolution is a theory of creation.
  b. It may throw light on the means of progress.

II. Evolution Means Descent of All Creatures from a Common One-celled Ancestral Form:
  a. Physical proof of the theory:
    1. In likeness of structure.
    2. In rudimentary organs.
    3. In geological records.
    4. In the Law of Recapitulation.

III. THEORIES OF THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION:

a. Natural Selection:

1. Variations in all directions, and adaptation.
2. Adaptation a struggle for life.
   - *α.* For place.
   - *β.* For food.
   - *γ.* For protection, through imitative color or form.
3. The value of artificial selection as partly showing us the processes of natural selection.
4. What natural selection fails to explain.

b. The theory of Sexual Selection, and its shortcomings.

c. The auxiliary theory of Isolation.

IV. THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EVOLUTION:

a. Evolution a self-evolving of uncreated life.

1. Wish, desire, love cause all change and creation.
2. Progress is from within, of our own will.
3. Change or re-birth necessitates death.
   - *α.* Death makes room for young.
   - *β.* We die for the sake of life.

b. Evolution and the aim of life:

1. Fitness and harmony the test of life.
2. It goes from likeness to unlikeness and recognition.

3. Pain, disease, death and changing standards of good and bad are the path of progress toward wholeness and understanding.

c. Evolution the simplest, clearest proof of relationship.

[Note.—For reference and illustrations, the first volume of Romanes' "Darwin and After Darwin" is more convenient to use and show than Darwin's own works.]

FIFTH MEETING

Prayer

I. A Communion, Not a Begging:

a. In a world that goes toward its own desire—which is also ours—it is folly to ask one's vast Self for anything.

b. Prayer is a momentary consciousness of the vast Self which is God.

II. The Value of Prayer:

a. To be conscious, by an effort, of the vast oneness, gives us renewed calmness and strength.

b. To pray for what we can be is to call forth the power to *be* it.

c. Prayer puts us in a state of mind in which we draw upon the endless source of power and possibility:

1. The value, therefore, of prayer before sleep.

III. The Manner of Prayer:
- *a.* By conscious words that give the communion.
- *b.* By an occasional state of mind.
- *c.* By every creative action.
- *d.* By the whole attitude of our life.

SIXTH MEETING

Immortality

I. Importance to Us of an Opinion Concerning Death and Immortality:
- *a.* We know we must die soon:
  1. Speak of the numberless generations of life.
- *b.* We live according to our expectations:
  1. Relation throughout history of beliefs concerning immortality and of the morality of peoples.
  2. Good and bad effects of belief in heaven and hell.

II. Knowledge Concerning Immortality:
- *a.* What is Knowledge?
  1. The relativity of all knowledge.
  2. Knowledge through conviction loses force when there is disagreement.
  3. Knowledge through analogy is like circumstantial evidence.

b. We know:

1. That matter and force do not die.
   α. We know of nothing that is positively mortal.
2. That life works in a certain direction.
3. That death and re-birth are the means of moving in that direction, *i.e.*, of progress.
4. That this progress is of the spirit or self.
5. That we are forever a part of the world, related to the whole.
6. As we know nothing but consciousness or self, we believe it must be immortal, though we have no proof.

III. The Theory of Race-immortality as an Ideal:

a. It is more improbable than self-immortality.

1. All planets die.
2. The last generation dies, too.

b. It is not true immortality:

1. The thing we cannot transmit is the Self which loves and seeks.

IV. Memory and Personality:

a. Admission of ignorance and indifference. Why?

1. Everything is a memory and a prophecy, since everything exists forever, and advances.
2. The body is a memory.
3. Memory must continue at least in its results on the self, if not more definitely.

b. Love and Meeting:

1. Love may have other satisfactions than we dream of.
2. We are all one, and cannot be separated.

V. "I Am" Expresses Immortality:

a. Each least thing is eternal and universal.

SEVENTH MEETING

The Meaning of Beauty

I. Beauty is the Symbol of Completeness and Harmony:

a. This is the reason beauty delights us:

1. It pictures the aim and desire of our whole life.

b. The smallest thing can be as a universe in itself, if it be complete and harmonious, *i.e.*, perfect:

1. A drop as well as a planet; a dog, in his way, as well as a man; a day as well as a century.

II. The Good, the True and the Beautiful Have the Same End, and Are Sought, Respectively, by Philosophy, Science and Art:

a. Philosophy seeks the whole at once, therefore can never reach that completeness.

b. Science seeks individual truths, not the moral truth, or aim:

1. Darwin, the philosophical scientist.

c. Art gives us that completeness, our aim, symbolized in a small and definite shape.

III. Genius is the Common Human Quality, Distinct from Talent:

a. The Genius differs not in *kind,* but in *degree,* from his fellows.

b. The desire for understanding and completeness, present in some measure in all, is genius.

c. The understanding in the spectator is akin to the genius in the artist.

IV. Talent is the Power of Expression:

a. To see all things as distinct wholes, imperson ally.

b. The skill to portray, and to handle material.

c. Genius and talent vary in degrees of relation in different artists' work:

1. The great idea, imperfectly executed.
2. The small idea in perfect form.

V. Art as the Symbol of Completeness and Creative Expression:

a. The sublime lie of the Symbol, truer than fact:

1. The effect of removal from life, of unreality, in relation to beauty. It seems more self-sufficient.

b. A complete vision must not take sides:
1. When art is partisan, *for* something, it is also *against* something. Complete representation.

c. Creative art gives us the joy of play, of creation:
1. Play—interplay—is the progress and will of life, and work but a name for the disagreeable but necessary part of the game.

EIGHTH MEETING

Art

I. Reason for Æsthetic Enquiry:
a. Art (creation) is the service of religion.
b. Laws of beauty (completeness) may give us laws for life.
c. Will prepare us to deal more sanely and surely with the involved problems of conduct.

II. Art in the Novel:
a. Completeness in the story:
1. Exclusion of unimportant and irrelevant matter.
α. The "story-teller" in us all.
β. The distractions of real life, with its far-relatedness.
γ. The "outside" event in melodrama too like life.

2. Exclusion of author's one-sided moral verdict.
3. Must not be *"for"* some characters, and *"against"* others.

b. Understanding of Life in novel:

1. False simplicity of poetic justice, of all good, and all bad.
2. Cant phrases offend because they appear imitative, not sincere.
3. Psychological and dramatic treatment:
   - *α*. Dramatic writer trusts reader's insight.
   - *β*. Action is more convincing than description of motive.
4. Humor and wit:
   - *α*. Humor is knowledge of human nature, its contrasted greatness and littleness.
   - *β*. Wit is a juggling of words into contrasted or incongruous effects.
   - *γ*. Both are a bringing together of the incongruous, in a paradox of unity.

NINTH MEETING

Art (Continued)

I. Art in Poetry:

a. Difference between Poetry and Prose:

1. Poetry is "set to music," and the rhythm carries part of the message.

2. This unreality or distance from life makes it more complete and beautiful in itself.
3. The emotions and imagination picture completeness more easily than the intellect:
   α. Because the desire for completeness is a feeling.

b. Completeness and understanding in Poetry:
1. Metaphor and simile a relationing of far-off things.
2. Symbol in Play replaces them:
   α. The Fairy-story.
3. Taking sides destroys poetry.
4. Exaggerated and conventional phrases are weak because they are insincere.

II. Art in Music:
a. Music is itself harmony and completeness:
1. The most intangible and removed, it is yet the most satisfying symbol of completeness and harmony.

III. The Opera:
a. Its attempt to combine all the Arts in one harmonious expression.

IV. Art in Painting:
a. Unity or completeness in painting:
1. Point of interest; with radiating lines, balance, and other means of making it prominent.

2. The cycle of colors, complete color, and the contrast of light and darkness.
3. A story, not embodied in the picture itself, but needing words of explanation, spoils unity.
4. Unnecessary detail, detracting from central interest and motive, also spoils unity.

b. Truth in painting:

1. Falseness of photographic truth, because of its lack of unity and purpose.
   α. The "out-of-focus" and imaginatively planned photograph sometimes artistic.
2. Perspective, the painter's vision of the single complete experience.
3. To see beauty in things is to see the truth.
4. "Prettiness," the result of catering to the shortcomings of the spectator's taste, is a violation of the artist's taste or sense of completeness and truth.
5. Knowledge of life (anatomy) is necessary:
   α. One must understand life to portray it.

V. Sculpture:

a. The Greek Drama of the visual Arts:

1. The unlifelikeness of the material, the removal from life, makes it more beautiful, and a truer symbol.

b. Expresses idea through attitude of the human form.

VI. ARCHITECTURE:

a. Like music's, its appeal is to the emotions, without definite sense or lifelikeness; but speaks as life itself.

b. To be complete, it must express outwardly its inner use and meaning.

c. To be sincere, or true, it must express the spirit of land and people.

[Note.—This ninth meeting might profitably be divided into two.]

TENTH MEETING

Shall We Make an Art of Life?

I. TRUTH, GOODNESS AND BEAUTY, BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS BEAUTY, WHICH COMBINES THE OTHER TWO:

a. Science is knowledge of facts.

b. Philosophy is vision of truth or aim.

c. Art is using our knowledge to create what we seek. Action and purpose.

II. ART IS SELF-EXPRESSION, CREATION, ACTION, RELATIONING:

a. All life, all being, is action, or self-expression.

b. All power in the world is imaginative, creative thought-power:

1. All things must be imagined before they can be known or done.

III. All Great Action, All Goodness, All Power in Life Follows the Same Laws as Art:

a. Therefore let us discover the laws of all arts, and see whether they can be applied to life.

IV. The Message of All the Arts:

a. All have the same laws:

1. Art is the symbol of completeness in a definite shape.
2. Is self-expression and self-fulfilment.
3. Must leave out the unimportant.
4. Must have variety and many-sidedness.
5. Must not be partisan, and must be sympathetic.
6. Must give the impression of truth.
7. Must be aloof, that is, separate from life, and see things, as it were, from a distance, in their wholeness.

V. Review and Conclusion:

a. Each smallest thing can symbolize the whole:

1. Each human life is a symbol of the complete Self, in a definite shape.
2. Each is deserving of reverence:
   α. Reverence is the small self awed before its own vastness.

[Note.—As the eleventh meeting was somewhat of a digression, and as the notes taken were covered in later meetings, it is here omitted.]

TWELFTH MEETING

What is Goodness?

I. Each Life, to be Good or Beautiful, Must be a Symbol of that Perfect or Complete Life for Which We Long:
   a. Life—the symbol of complete Self in a definite shape.
   b. The good man makes all he knows and touches a complete, harmonious whole:
      1. Goodness is always of relation.
      2. One cannot be perfect till all are so:
         α. Therefore goodness implies modesty.

II. False and True Good:
   a. The one law of Love, and its petty, changing codes:
      1. True good of changing harmonious relation.
      2. False good of outworn custom and rule.

III. The Meaning of Self-expression:
   a. The small and large Self:
      1. The whole world is the whole of me.
      2. Serve, not others only, but others as part of yourself.
   b. Self-sacrifice:
      1. Giving up one thing for a greater thing.

2. Happiness is whatever we want most.
3. If completeness is the aim of life, then all lesser happiness is sacrificed to it.
4. If life is a drama, a whole, we give up our selfish satisfaction to see that whole self satisfied.

c. Creation is Self-expression, is endless, higher rebirth:

1. All action reveals the actor.
2. Life is a drama, in which we feel ourselves to have equal prominence with others, and conscious power of control:
   α. We cannot help having influence.
   β. Let us shape our influence for the whole.

THIRTEENTH MEETING

Self-fulfilment Through Overcoming Limitations

I. Envy, Its Narrowness and Blindness:

a. Every man serves me who does for me what I cannot do for myself:

1. Each one fills out my shortcomings.

b. Use, instead of coveting.

II. Self-regulation in Despite of Self:

a. The moral sense of beauty, an intellectual sense of completeness, makes us regulate and suppress our desires:

1. Hence we make laws which are substitutes for understanding love.

b. The substitutes necessary until love conquers, are:

1. Justice.
2. Honesty.
3. Duty.
4. Binding by promise.
5. Obedience.

c. Conventions, their changes and their convenience.

III. Some Virtues Changed by Love's Demands:

a. Revenge, the first expression of Loyalty:

1. Our admiration for such expression in its own early time.

b. Pity, the developer of Feeling:

1. Degenerates into Weakness and Impotence.
2. Is an Insult:
   α. A strong man does not pity himself. Should not pity other strong selves.
3. Strong Sympathy, and our common Working for the great Happiness, should replace pity.

c. Reverence for special people, with Fear:

1. Self-reverence means reverence for all selves.
2. Reverence the old—and the young, too.
3. The reverence with love replaces the reverence with fear.

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Loyalty, and Conscious Allegiance to our Individual Aspiration

I. PATRIOTISM; ITS MEANING:
- *a.* We are children of all we can love and serve:
  1. The growth of loyalty, from the family to the world:
     - *α.* War as a fighting for peace.
- *b.* Patriotism in its growth, like all progress, must include the small in the large, though in seeming disloyalty:
  1. Disloyalty to one's country cannot be loyalty to the world.
  2. But wholesome criticism often seems disloyal:
     - *α* The loyalty of revolutionists.

II. CONSCIOUS CHOICE IN SELF-DEVELOPMENT:
- *a.* Know what you want most to be.
- *b.* Eliminate whatever interferes with your choice; make life a work of art, not a haphazard photograph.
  1. Concentration.
  2. Choose and subordinate your studies for their worth to you.
  3. Prefer friends to acquaintances.

4. Do the work at hand (charity at home), and be sure your service harmonizes with your knowledge and your whole life.
5. Never degrade the end by making an *end* out of the *means*. (Business, athletics, study, must always be means.)

c. Dare to desire the utmost, unflinchingly:
1. Greatness comes from persistent desire rather than from inborn skill.

d. Youth and old age:
1. Desire and service can continue throughout life.

III. Variety and Rhythm:

a. Varied life with single Aim:
1. Concentrate on one thing at a time, but not on one thing all the time.
2. The meaning and worth of Knowledge.
3. Never be bored, or bore:
   α. Sense of humor; and use of silence.
4. Work and play, exertion and rest, must harmonize:
   α. Even your pleasures will reflect your character, or taste.

b. Be a rhythm, a measure, a force like music in the life all about you.

[Note.—The fifteenth meeting was spent on Christian Science, and is therefore omitted from the notes.]

SIXTEENTH MEETING

Social Relations

I. The Avoidance of Bitter Partisanship:
- *a.* Take sides, not with persons, but with causes.
- *b.* Use all. Be for all, and against none.

II. Social Sympathy:
- *a.* Humanity as a vast Self:
  1. Democracy means we have all the right to be equal:
     - *α.* Faith and reverence for self in all.
     - *β.* Service is larger self-service.
     - *γ.* Each does his part; hand and head.
  2. To keep well, to be satisfied, we must care for the sick and miserable:
     - *α.* Starvation.
     - *β.* Old age.
     - *γ.* Contagion.
- *b.* To care for the weak strengthens the strong:
  1. To destroy the weak is dangerous loss. (Rome and Sparta.)
- *c.* In passing judgment on crimes, hate not persons but their acts:
  1. Each acts according to his desire or needs.
  2. Punishment as preventive and cure.

III. Truth in Personal Relations:
- *a.* Truth-telling not the whole of Truth:
  1. Malicious truth-telling is not truth.
  2. Worth of kind, true criticism and praise.

b. Our judgments of people judge us:
1. Our limited understanding.
2. Say: "I am one who hates, or loves," etc.

c. Whom shall we please, and how?
1. The morality of good manners.
2. Vanity, the pretended worth; and true worth or loveableness.
3. "Prettiness" in manner, pleasing those who cannot understand us.
4. Social frivolity, overdress and luxury, and its result of friendship.
   α. Show is for those we do not love. (Resembles "costly material" in art.)

[IV. Women and Work:
a. The true preparation for marriage.
b. Social life and service.
c. Knowledge as mere show; or as power.]

SEVENTEENTH MEETING

Aloofness and Creation

I. Seeing Life as a Spectator, from God's Point of View:
a. The collective personality:
1. Psychological fact: We are often outside ourselves in tense moments.
2. Getting far away from oneself in self-criticism and judgment.

3. Our reasonableness in crises.
4. All heroism is self-forgetfulness for the sake of the whole.

II. Result in Action and Creative Living:

a. Partnership with whole, or God:
   1. We can see and use our personal life as part of whole.
   2. We can get above our own sorrow and pain, and use them.

b. This aloofness from self, or being the *One,* is the root of all morals:
   1. Some know this, and make laws; the others are forced to obey.

c. Aloofness is collective experience, or memory, whence we grow toward the good. We live in all time and space.

III. Personal Result of Our Club's Work:

a. Drawing judgment from the whole.

b. Drawing strength from the whole.

c. Training our lesser desires to serve the whole aim and desire of our life.

d. How shall we attain to fulfilment in our personal life?
   1. Money, health, power, etc., as certificates of creative value, to be used for new creation.

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